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# Foguangsi on Mount Wutai: Architecture of Politics and Religion

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# Foguangsi on Mount Wutai: Architecture of Politics and Religion

## **Abstract**

Foguangsi (Monastery of Buddha's Radiance) is a monastic complex that stands on a high terrace on a mountainside, in the southern ranges of Mount Wutai, located in present-day Shanxi province. The mountain range of Wutai has long been regarded as the sacred abode of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and a prominent center of the Avataṃsaka School. Among the monasteries that have dotted its landscape, Foguangsi is arguably one of the best-known sites that were frequented by pilgrims. The rediscovery of Foguangsi by modern scholars in the early 20th century has been considered a "crowning moment in the modern search for China's ancient architecture". Most notably, the Buddha Hall, which was erected in the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE), was seen as the ideal of a "vigorous style" of its time, and an embodiment of an architectural achievement at the peak of Chinese civilization. However, after several initial reports, scholarship on the structure has for the most part been confined to introductory writings intended for a general audience, and a thorough re-examination of Foguangsi is long overdue. Through the methodology of a case study, my thesis seeks to understand not only its art and architecture, but also the social and religious context in which the art and architecture was produced.

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Architecture of Politics and Religion

Sijie Ren

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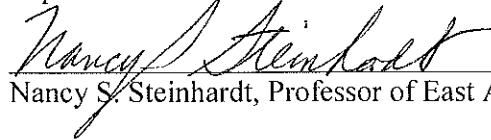
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**FOGUANGSI ON MOUNT WUTAI:**

**ARCHITECTURE OF POLITICS AND RELIGION**

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*To my parents.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

### FOGUANGSI ON MOUNT WUTAI: ARCHITECTURE OF POLITICS AND RELIGION

Sijie Ren

Nancy S. Steinhardt

Foguangsi (Monastery of Buddha's Radiance) is a monastic complex that stands on a high terrace on a mountainside, in the southern ranges of Mount Wutai, located in present-day Shanxi province. The mountain range of Wutai has long been regarded as the sacred abode of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and a prominent center of the Avatamsaka School. Among the monasteries that have dotted its landscape, Foguangsi is arguably one of the best-known sites that were frequented by pilgrims. The rediscovery of Foguangsi by modern scholars in the early 20th century has been considered a “crowning moment in the modern search for China's ancient architecture”. Most notably, the Buddha Hall, which was erected in the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE), was seen as the ideal of a “vigorous style” of its time, and an embodiment of an architectural achievement at the peak of Chinese civilization. However, after several initial reports, scholarship on the structure has for the most part been confined to introductory writings intended for a general audience, and an thorough re-examination of Foguangsi is long overdue. Through the methodology of a case study, my thesis seeks to understand not only its art and architecture, but also the social and religious context in which the art and architecture was produced.

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## NOTES ON CONVENTIONS

Romanized transcriptions of personal names, geographic names and other proper names have been standardized to accord with the most commonly used *Hanyu Pinyin* (Chinese), modified Hepburn (Japanese), R. R. (Korean) and I. A. S. T. (Sanskrit) spelling systems. However, spelling in quotations has been left unchanged. Exceptions are also made when a person has preferred spelling of their own name. In such cases, standardized spelling is given in parentheses in its first appearance. Note that personal names of Asian men and women are given with family name first.

Standard characters are given when proper names appear for the first time. In order to better distinguish proper names, the romanizations of proper names precede the characters rather than follow them. In the bibliography, East Asian sources are cited with titles consistent with the variant forms appeared in the original source (manuscripts, prints, epigraphic texts, etc., whether they are in simplified or traditional Chinese, Japanese, or Korean characters), followed with an English translation of the title. European works appear in the languages in which they were published.

Translations of Chinese official and government agency titles follow those in Charles O. Hucker 1985. Traditional Chinese measurements are converted following Qiu Guangming 1992. Reign dates are presented in the following way: “name of reign-era reign-year”. The conversion of traditional Chinese lunar dates into Western calendar system is based on the service provide by the Academia Sinica Computer Center (<http://sinocal.sinica.edu.tw/>). All dates in Western calendar are denoted with BCE (Before Common Era) or CE (Common Era) except in citations. All translations in the dissertation

are my own, except where otherwise indicated.

References to texts in the *Taishō Revised Tripiṭaka* 大正新脩大藏經 (Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku et al. comp. 1924-1932) are indicated by their volume number (T), text number (n), followed by page and register. Some frequently cited works used the following abbreviations:

*Biographies* = *Biographies of Eminent Monks* 高僧傳

*Continued Biographies* = *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* 續高僧傳

*Song Biographies* = *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* 宋高僧傳

*Account of Stimuli and Responses* = *Account of the [Mysterious] Stimuli and Responses Related to the Three Jewels in China* 集神州三寶感通錄

*Avatamsaka Biographies* = *Biographies and Accounts Related to the Avatamsaka Sūtra* 華嚴經傳記

*Record of the Orthodox Lineage* = *Record of the Orthodox Lineage of the Patriarchs since the Buddha* 佛祖統紀

*Collection of Memorials* = *Collection of Memorials by the Great Monk Amoghavajra of Critical Wisdom and Vast Knowledge, the Tripiṭaka Master, bestowed as the Grand Excellency of Works under Emperor Daizong* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集

*Brief Record* = *Brief Record of Mount Qingliang* 清涼略傳

*Ancient Record* = *Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang* 古清涼傳

*Expanded Record* = *Expanded Record of Mount Qingliang* 廣清涼傳

*Further Record* = *Further Record of Mount Qingliang* 續清涼傳

*Imperial Readings* = *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* 太平御覽

Similarly, references to texts collected in the *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* 四庫全書 (Wenyuan'ge 文淵閣 edition, Ji Yun et al. comp. 1772-1782) are indicated by their volume number (S), fascicle number (f), followed by page and register. For other primary sources and translations quoted, please see the Bibliography. Frequently cited sources in

the Bibliography used the following abbreviations:

*CHBJ* = *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 中華佛學學報

*JCAH* = *Journal of Chinese Architecture History* 中国建筑史论汇刊

*LSC* = *Complete Works of Liang Ssu-ch'eng* 梁思成全集

*WW* = *Cultural Relics* 文物

*WTS* = *Mt Wutai Researches* 五台山研究

*XSHK* = *Bulletin of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture* 中國營造學社彙刊

Other abbreviations used throughout the dissertation include:

abbr. = abbreviation

a. k. a. = also known as

annot. = annotator (annotated by)

b. = a person's year of birth

Ch. = Chinese

coll. = collator (collated by)

comp. = compiler (compiled by)

d. = a person's year of death

d. u. = a person's date of birth or death is unknown

ed. = editor (edited by)

f. k. a. = formerly known as

fl. = a person's active period

Jp. = Japanese

Kor. = Korean

l. k. a. = later known as

r. = reigned

Skt. = Sanskrit

suppl. = supplement (supplemented by)

trans. = translator (translated by)

var. = variations in spelling / characters



## INTRODUCTION

Mount Wutai 五臺山 (a.k.a. Mount Wufeng 五峯山; lit. Five Terrace/Peak Mountain), or Mount Qingliang 清涼山 (lit. Clear and Cool Mountain), is located not far from the Xinzhou 忻州 and Wutai 五臺 counties in the north-east part of the present-day Shanxi 山西 province in north China (Maps 1 & 2). The mountain range of Wutai covers an area of nearly 20,000 ha, and encompasses a cluster of peaks soaring as high as 3,061 m. It has long been regarded as the sacred abode of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī 文殊師利 (var. 曼殊師利) and a prominent center of the Avataṃsaka 華嚴 School. Although religious activities surrounding this locus waxed and waned with changing socio-political conditions, it remains the most important Buddhist mountain in China. Naturally, Mount Wutai has been a prominent research topic for more than a century, frequently featured in studies on sinology or religion.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, the boom in cultural history, with its fascinating developments in research theories and methodologies, has instilled new vitality into the field, causing an upsurge in academic interest in the study of Mount Wutai, both in China and abroad.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Given the importance of this site in the spread of Buddhism from China to Japan, Japanese scholars were on the frontier of Mount Wutai studies since the early 20th century, leading to the definitive work *Mount Wutai* (Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takeo 1942). The second half of the 20th century witnessed a surge of interest in this sacred site in Euro-American academia (Étienne Lamotte 1960, 1-96; Ernesta Marchand 1976, 158-173; Raoul Birnbaum 1983). Although Chinese scholars are relative latecomers to the scene, “Mount Wutai Studies” has grown rapidly into a celebrated “sub-discipline” of Buddhist Studies. In addition to a large corpus of essays and monographs, since 1985, the journal *Mount Wutai Researches* was created as an academic platform specifically devoted to this subject.

<sup>2</sup> Topics covered by the latest publications include poems from the Dunhuang manuscripts on Mount Wutai, Chinese and Japanese miracle tales that took place here, the current practice of wind music performance at Wutai monasteries, the Chinese application of the UNESCO World Heritage management framework within this sacred site, and other topics. See, for example, Mary Anne Cartelli 1999 and id. 2013; Susan Andrews

The mountainous landscape of Wutai, with lush grassland, thick forests and snow-covered peaks, is also home to about fifty ancient monasteries that are extant and continue to attract pilgrims from across Asia to date (Map 3; Figure 1). Among the monasteries that have dotted the Mount Wutai landscape, Foguangsi 佛光寺 (Monastery of Buddha's Radiance) is arguably one of the best-known sites of interest to the pilgrims (Figure 2). Subsequently, when China embraced Western knowledge and entered into the Modern world, Foguangsi made an eye-catching debut into the academic arena with its ancient history and material remains, and has remained in the spotlight of Chinese art and architectural history ever since. From its establishment, near demise and subsequent revivals in the distant past, to the moment of its “discovery” by the modern world and later elevation to iconic status, the history and historiography of the site have been deeply intertwined with myth and legend.

People who learned about this site never failed to notice its association with Liang Ssu-ch'eng 梁思成 (Liang Sicheng; 1901-1972 CE), the premier architectural historian who transformed native intellectuals' amateurish interests in Chinese ancient buildings into a modern discipline. In different versions of Liang Ssu-ch'eng's field reports and later writings, the trip that led to the finding of the site was highlighted as much as the description or analysis of the architecture,<sup>3</sup> and the ascent on mule to the lower reaches of a

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2004 and id. 2013; Beth Szczepanski 2008 and id. 2012; Robert J. Shepherd 2013; Lin Wei-cheng 2006 and id. 2014.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in the “Travel Notes (記遊)” section of Liang's 1944-1945 report, he recounted the unfolding of their field trip in detail (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944, 14-17).

remote mountain range of Wutai has become a household story in the field. In discussing this “crowning moment in the modern search for China’s ancient architecture”, Nancy S. Steinhardt has astutely pointed out that this event can be read on two levels. In addition to the making of the “Buddha Hall 佛殿” of the Foguangsi into an “icon”, whose image was seen as the ideal of a “vigorous style” akin to that of the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907 CE) and consequently an embodiment of an architectural achievement at the peak of Chinese civilization, the man who found it also became a cultural “icon”.<sup>4</sup>

In this introduction, I believe it is necessary to first offer a overview of the historiography of Foguangsi before diving further into the site itself. With the increasing interest in the history of scholarship in the field of Chinese architectural history in recent years,<sup>5</sup> architectural historians and critics devoted much attention to historiographic issues surrounding on the “discovery” of Foguangsi, and in so doing touched off a widespread debate in the field.<sup>6</sup> Vimalin Rujivacharakul, for example, has argued that Liang and his colleagues were led by clues unearthed by earlier visits by Japanese scholars,<sup>7</sup> and that the

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<sup>4</sup> Nancy S. Steinhardt 2004, 228.

<sup>5</sup> Some notable publications by Chinese scholars who adopted the intellectual historical approach include Han Pao-teh 1972; Hsia Chu-joe 1990, 6-48; Zhao Chen 2001, 77-86; Lai Delin 2001, 90-99 and id. 2011 a, 126-127; Li Shiqiao 2002, 35-45, id. 2003, 470-489 and id. 2009; Min-Ying Wang 2009; Li Jun 2011, 383-427.

<sup>6</sup> The major controversy was sparked by Zhu Tao 2014, whose thesis was consistent with Vimalin Rujivacharakul 2006. See also Vimalin Rujivacharakul and Luo Deyin 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Before Rujivacharakul, Marylin M. Rhie had already acknowledged the role played by Japanese scholars in the “discovery” of the Foguangsi in her monograph on the Buddhist sculptures at the site. Rhie opened her dissertation recounting “the discovery and disclosure” of the old and once renowned monastery by Ono Genmyō and Tokiwa Daijō in the 1920s. However, Rhie did not discuss the political message behind the attribution of the discovery. See Marylin M. Rhie 1970, ii-v.

recognition of this aspect of the Foguangsi's discovery tale will strip away the Chinese initiative in the discourse, as the historical value of the Foguangsi is built on "how history is written or, more precisely, *who* writes the history".<sup>8</sup> While Rujivacharakul was apt in identifying the political components that underlie this event, unfortunately, her arguments are undermined by some critical factual errors. In the following sections, I aim to readdress these controversies surrounding the "discovery" of Foguangsi and clear up some of the misunderstanding or misinformation thereof.

#### **ANOTHER LOOK AT HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE FOGUANGSI**

The rise of architectural history as an academic discipline in China in the early 20th century was greatly influenced by the advent of Western knowledge.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the tensions between Western influence and domestic responses, the situation was further complicated by the involvement of a third group of scholars from Japan,<sup>10</sup> who were introduced to the discipline of architectural history even earlier through the "Meiji Reformation 明治維新".<sup>11</sup> Japanese scholars pioneered in studying ancient Chinese art and architecture from their own interests, notably through the concept of a "Asia is One"

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<sup>8</sup> Vimalin Rujivacharakul 2006, 234-247. In a monograph on Liang Ssu-ch'eng, Zhu Tao cast doubt on whether Liang was the "discoverer" of the Foguangsi, which echoed Rujivacharakul's skepticism (Zhu Tao 2012).

<sup>9</sup> For a comprehensive review of the making of architectural historiography in China in the 20th century, see Wen Yuqing 2006, and for the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, see Min-Ying Wang 2010, 1-23 and 33-101.

<sup>10</sup> For an extensive account of early Japanese scholarship on Chinese urban planning and architectural history, see Xu Subin 1999, 41-73; for the rise of Japanese Sinology in general, see Yan Shaodang 2009, 193-248.

<sup>11</sup> Nihon Kenchiku Gakkai 2001, 1687-1689.

cultural sphere, exemplified by the work of the art historian Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心 (1863-1913 CE).<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding the use of this ideology to legitimize Japanese aggression and colonialism that completely discredited the movement in China since the 1930s, intellectuals from across Asia who were in favor of the Pan-Asianism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw transnationalism and Asian solidarity at its core.<sup>13</sup> Their struggle against Western colonialism unsurprisingly manifested itself in the rejection of the production of colonial knowledge.

Prior to the 20th century, the works of Banister Fletcher (1866-1953 CE) and others had largely dismissed Asian traditions as irrelevant to the classical styles of the West.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In his seminal work *The Ideals of the East*, published in Meiji 36 (1903 CE), Okakura Tenshin traced the mainland sources of Japanese art to Korea, China, and further to India to create the “Asia is One” cultural sphere. The nationalist underpinnings of the time, however, were reflected in Okakura’s positioning of Japan as the most achieved in this chain of accumulations in art and architectural inspirations. He suggested that “in Japan alone that the historic wealth of Asiatic culture can be consecutively studied through its treasured specimens”, and that “[t]he history of Japanese art becomes thus the history of Asiatic ideals—the beach where each successive wave of Eastern thought has left its sand-ripple as it beat against the national consciousness” (Okakura Tenshin 1903, 6-10). For discussions on the key role played by Okakura Tenshin, see John Clark 2005; Masako Racel 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman 2011. “Pan-Asianism (アジア主義)” as used here refers to the cultural movement. Although related on a deeper level, proclamations of the “New Order in East Asia (東亜新秩序)” or the “Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (大東亜共栄圏)” in the 1930s-1940s should be regarded as popularizations of Pan-Asianism to provide ideological support for the Japanese war effort, claiming to “liberate” fellow Asians from Western colonial control (cf. Eri Hotta 2007, 1-52). It should be noted, however, from the very beginning there had been criticisms against the utopian nature of the Pan-Asian Movement and the hypocritical behavior on the Japanese side. For example, Urs Matthias Zachmann pointed out that while the Raising Asia Society 興亜会 (later renamed the Asia Association 亜細亜協会) founded in 1880 promoted cooperation between Asian nations, in reality, the Japanese regime was carrying out a series of undertakings to exploit China, leading to the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895 CE (Urs Matthias Zachmann 2011, 53-60). Influential Chinese figures such as Chang Ping-lin 章炳麟 (1869-1936 CE) had initially supported an alliance between China and Japan, before he realized the Japanese use of the concept as a tool to support its expansionism (Cai Yuan P. 2011, 177-184).

<sup>14</sup> In the 4th edition of 1901 CE, Fletcher included a section on “non-historical styles” in contrast to the historical styles of the West. He wrote, “those styles—Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Central American, and Saracenic—which remained detached from Western Art and exercised little direct influence on it [...] can

Nevertheless, colonial scholars such as James Fergusson (1808-1886 CE) expanded the scholarship on the architecture of South Asia and beyond with his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, which was widely adopted as a textbook in Japan during the early Meiji period.<sup>15</sup> Fergusson wrote:

[...] about the architecture of China [...] there really are no buildings in the country worthy of the people or their civilization. [...] The same remarks apply to Japan. So far as our knowledge at present extends, there is not a single permanent building on the island of so monumental a character as to deserve being dignified by being classed among the true architectural examples of other countries. [...] It may be, however, that the Japanese do not belong to one of the building races of mankind, and have no taste for this mode of magnificence.<sup>16</sup>

These kinds of insulting remarks stimulated pushback from Japanese intellectuals. For example, the rising architectural historian Itō Chūta 伊東忠太 (1867-1954 CE),<sup>17</sup> who was

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scarcely be as interesting from an architect's point of view as those of Europe". The binary structure of the text was later changed in 1961 CE in the posthumously published 17th edition, and went through further rearrangements and expansions, see Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu 1996, 3, id. 1998, 6-17. For the influence of Banister Fletcher's earlier editions of the *History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for the Student, Craftsman, and Amateur* on first generation Chinese architectural historians, see Lai Delin 2001, 181-237; id. 2011, 126-127; Nancy S. Steinhardt 2014, 47-48.

<sup>15</sup> Nihon Kenchiku Gakkai 2001, 1688; Kamiya Takeo 2009; Xu Subin 2010, 43-45. The end of the Meiji era saw the compilation of the first comprehensive Japanese architecture textbook with a section on architectural history, such as the *Comprehensive Knowledge of Refined Architecture of Japan and the West* 和洋改良大建築学, compiled by Mitsuhashi Shirō 三橋四郎 (1867-1915 CE) and published during 1904-1908 CE. Volume 3 of the textbook contains the section on architectural history, which came out in 1908 CE. A revised edition, *Comprehensive Knowledge of Architecture* 大建築学, was published during 1923-1925 CE. Nevertheless, both used Fergusson's religion-based framework, even directly reproducing his lithographs as illustrations.

<sup>16</sup> James Fergusson 1876, 685, 709-710.

<sup>17</sup> Itō Chūta was among the first few native scholars who started to research traditional Japanese architecture. Foreign architects and historians such as Josiah Conder (1852-1920 CE) had been encouraging his Japanese students to pursue the study of traditional architecture but their main interests were still centered on the Western tradition. Itō Chūta recalled an episode from around 1880-1881 CE, when the English architect William Burges (1827-1881 CE) asked Conder's favorite student Tatsuno Kingo 辰野金吾 (1854-1919 CE) about the principles of Japanese architecture, Tatsuno could not provide any answer (Itō Chūta 1940, 67-72). As Toshio Watanabe has suggested, this situation started to change in the late 1880s CE. Among the second

much influenced by Okakura,<sup>18</sup> strongly opposed Fergusson's views.<sup>19</sup> Itō bluntly called out the “shortsightedness of Westerners” in an article on the “necessity of Japanese architectural research”, published in Meiji 27 (1894 CE),<sup>20</sup> shortly after he published his seminal article on the architecture of Hōryūji 法隆寺.<sup>21</sup> It took another four years for Itō to complete his doctoral thesis on the same architectural complex, after which he put forth a second study.<sup>22</sup> In Meiji 32 (1899 CE), he was appointed as an associate professor at the Imperial University of Tōkyō 東京帝国大学.<sup>23</sup>

In the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion in Meiji 34 (1901 CE), as one of the Japanese delegates, Itō went on his first field trip to China and surveyed the Forbidden Palace in Beijing. Upon returning home, he seemed to have decided to take up the task of studying Chinese traditional architecture, and expressed his motives as such:

It is only logical that the architectural production of such an outstanding country and people possesses a distinct style. However, Western architects often overlook this fact, or simply called this [style] ugly or treat it as child's play. It is to our deep regret that these unfair assertions should harm our Japanese architecture by

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generation of professional architects and historians, including Itō who studied with Tatsuno and became academically active in 1892 CE, there had been a notable increase in interest towards Japanese and other Asian architectural traditions (Watanabe Toshio 1996, 27).

<sup>18</sup> For Okakura's influence on Itō Chūta during his employment at the Tōkyō School of Fine Arts 東京美術学校, see Mishima Masahiro 1987, 769-770.

<sup>19</sup> Inoue Shoichi found a copy of Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, the 1891 edition, in the collection of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies 国際日本文化研究センター, whose stamps and handwritten notes suggest it once belonged to Itō Chūta. Itō expressed criticism in the notes, sometimes exclaiming “No!” in the page margins (Inoue Shoichi 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Itō Chūta 1894, 227-236.

<sup>21</sup> Itō Chūta 1893, 317-350. For discussions on Itō Chūta's effort to situate Japanese architecture in world architectural history in his discussions of Hōryūji, see Inoue Shoichi 2000, 129-143.

<sup>22</sup> Itō Chūta 1897, 1-176.

<sup>23</sup> Choi Kang Hoon 1982.

association, and consequently cause misinterpretations of Japanese architecture. [I] think for one thing, because of the completely different philosophies of the people of the East and that of the West, the Euro-Americans are not able to fully understand Chinese reality.

斯くの如き世界無比の国土と国民とが産める建築は又推理上一種の特徴を備ふるものならざるべからず。然るに泰西建築家は多くこれを度外視して顧みず、或はこれを以て直に醜悪なりと云ひ、児戯に類するものなりと為し、而して其の飛沫は我が日本建築の上に及び、日本建築に対する認識を誤るが如きは吾人の深く遺憾とするところなり。思ふに一は東西人の心理全く相異れると、欧米の人多支那の真相を詳かにせざるとに因らずむばあらず。<sup>24</sup>

Modern Chinese historiography has often depicted Itō Chūta's attitude toward studying Chinese architecture on behalf of the Chinese people in an overwhelmingly negative light. However, it is important to remember that at the turn of the century, native Chinese scholarship on the subject was nearly non-existent. It seems inappropriate to confuse his vision for self-awareness and external recognition for Asian architectural traditions as part of an integrated whole<sup>25</sup> that also encompassed Japanese wartime aggression.

Itō was soon offered a full professorship at the Imperial University, and was subsequently obligated to study overseas before taking up the position. He insisted on embarking on a “grand trip” through the Asian continent before setting foot on Europe, where the university had required him to visit.<sup>26</sup> Returning from two years of travel and investigations through China, India and Turkey, Itō published on the “system of Oriental

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<sup>24</sup> Itō Chūta 1903.

<sup>25</sup> As Satō has pointed out, in contemporary art historical research in Japan, the “history of Asian art” and the “history of Japanese art” still constitute a nearly unified field—the “history of Japanese and Asian art”—in opposition to the “history of Western art” (Satō Dōshin 2011, 168-169).

<sup>26</sup> Muramatsu Shin 1997.



architecture” and the “values of their beauty” in Meiji 38 (1905 CE), continually opposing widespread Euro-centric approaches to architectural history.<sup>27</sup> He would set out on eight additional trips to China in subsequent years.<sup>28</sup> Regarded as an extremely influential figure in the field alongside Itō was the architectural historian Sekino Tadashi 関野貞 (1868-1935 CE), who was also heavily influenced by Okakura. Sekino conducted ten field trips to China between 1907 and 1935 CE.<sup>29</sup> Beyond being equipped with the latest architectural investigation techniques and knowledge of representational conventions, Japanese scholars had an additional advantage due to their familiarities with shared East Asian architectural traditions. Consequently, Japanese research on Chinese architecture immediately stood out from the amateurish writings on the subject from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and served as a model for native scholars in years to come.<sup>30</sup>

The native initiative for research on Chinese architecture came about three decades after Itō Chūta’s 1901 CE investigation, marked by the establishment of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture 中國營造學社 (hereafter the Society) in 1930 CE.<sup>31</sup> In stark contrast to what previous scholars described as nationalist aspirations,<sup>32</sup> the advocacy of the founding father and president of the Society, Chu Chi-chien 朱啟鈐 (Zhu Qiqian;

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<sup>27</sup> Itō Chūta 1905a; id. 1905 b, 23-41. cf. Xu Subin 2014, 72-73.

<sup>28</sup> Choi Kang Hoon 1982.

<sup>29</sup> Sekino’s first trip to China during Meiji 39-40 (1906-1907 CE) followed the routes taken by Okakura Tenshin (Xu Subin 2002, 60-64), meeting with him in Xi’an (id. 2014, 77-78).

<sup>30</sup> Chen Mingda, for example, acknowledged the influence of Japanese scholarship on the research approaches adopted by the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture (Wen Yuqing 2006, 36).

<sup>31</sup> Lin Zhu 1995; Cui Yong 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Li Shiqiao 2003, 470-478.

1872-1964 CE),<sup>33</sup> reflected reservations about nationalism. He explicitly expressed his transnational stance in the inaugural address:

The further we proceed, the more we feel that the study of Chinese architecture is not the private property of our own people. Our eastern neighbors have helped us in the preservation of old genres and in strenuous research along the same lines; our western friends have helped us by offering the scientific method and discoveries in our own field. To the scholars of all nationalities and all aims we express our sincere thanks and look forward in earnest hope for future contributions.<sup>34</sup>

且也學術愈進步。則大同觀念愈深。民族觀念愈淡。今更重言。以申明之。曰中國營造學社者。全人類之學術。非吾一民族所私有。吾東鄰之友。幸為我保存古代文物。并與吾人工作方向相同。吾西鄰之友。貽我以科學方法。且時以其新解。予我以策勵。此皆吾人所銘佩不忘。且日祝其先我而成功者也。<sup>35</sup>

Chu's broad perspective drew support from both Western and Japanese intellectuals.

Among them were three Japanese architects and historians, Araki Seizaburō 荒木清三 (d.u.), Matsuzaki Tsuruo 松崎鶴雄 (1868-1949 CE) and Hashikawa Tokio 橋川時雄 (1894-1982 CE), who served on the board of the Society prior to 1934 CE.<sup>36</sup> Itō Chūta, Sekino Tadashi and many others including art and architectural historians Iida Sugashi 飯田須賀斯 (1902-1971 CE), Itō Seizō 伊藤清造 (fl. 1920s-1940s CE), Murata Jirō 村田治郎 (1895-1985 CE), Tanabe Yasushi 田邊泰 (1899-1982 CE), frequently made gifts of

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<sup>33</sup> See Kong Zhiwei 2007.

<sup>34</sup> From the original English translation appended to the original transcript of the speech (ibid.). However, for some reason, the text did not translate the last six lines in the corresponding Chinese version.

<sup>35</sup> Chu Chi-chien 1930, 9.

<sup>36</sup> Members of the Society were recorded on its first six volumes of bulletins published during 1930-1936 CE. Two Western scholars also joined, Gustav Ecke 艾克 (1896-1971 CE) in 1931 CE, followed by Ernst Boerschmann 柏世曼 (var. 鮑希曼, 鮑斯曼, 柏爾斯曼; 1873-1949 CE) in 1932 CE. Both were enlisted as members until 1936 CE when the Society issued its sixth volume of the bulletin shortly before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

books to the Society.<sup>37</sup>

Most significantly, Itō Chūta was invited to lecture on Chinese architectural history soon after the founding of the Society.<sup>38</sup> According to a Chinese transcription of his lecture, Itō expressed his vision for Sino-Japanese collaboration as such:

The research of Chinese architecture must be conducted from two aspects, namely textual records and material remains. [...] As for a specific scheme, my humble suggestion is this: the China side can take textual studies as its most important undertaking, whereas the Japan side can focus on researching the extant sites. [I wonder] whether this would be appropriate? For you and your fellow Sinologists who valued and mastered the literary canon, investigating textual sources should not be difficult at all. In terms of material remains, the Japan side itself is not yet entirely skillful in scientific investigation methods, on-site surveys and drawings, or the ordering of development sequences. However, [we] would like to offer our faithful service [in this aspect].

支那建築研究，非從文獻與遺物兩方面進行不可。[...] 至其具體方法，據鄙人所見：在支那方面，以調查文獻為主；日本方面，以研究遺物為主，不知適當否？在古來尊重文獻，精通文獻之支那學者諸氏，調查文獻決非難事。

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<sup>37</sup> Other Japanese intellectuals and officials that made gifts include Aizu Yaichi 會津八一 (1881-1956 CE), Harada Yoshito 原田淑人 (1885-1974 CE), Horikoshi Saburō 堀越三郎 (1886-1972 CE), Imanishi Ryū 今西龍 (1875-1932 CE), Iwamura Shigemitsu 岩村成允 (1876-1943), Kosugi Kazuo 小杉一雄 (1908-1998), Okumura Ikurō 奥村伊九良 (1901-1944 CE), Ōi Seichi 大井清一 (fl. 1920s-1930s CE), Shimamura Kōzaburō 島村孝三郎 (d.u.). Many Japan-based institutions also appeared among the donors, such as the Architectural Institute of Japan 日本建築學會, Japan Institute of Architects 日本建築士會, Far Eastern Archaeological Society 東亞考古學會, Tōkyō Archaeological Society 東京考古學會, Society of Archaeological Studies 考古學研究會, Institute of Oriental Culture 東方文化學院, Sinological Society of Japan 日本支那學會, and so forth. Books were also sent from museums, universities and publishers, including the Japan Imperial Museum 日本皇室博物館, Tōkyō Imperial University 東京帝國大學, Imperial Fine Arts Academy of Japan 日本帝國美術院, Waseda University 早稻田大學, Tōkyō Liberal Arts and Science University 東京文理科大學, Hiroshima University of Arts and Sciences 廣島文理科大學, Tōkyō Prefectural Government of Japan 日本東京府, Tōdaiji Temple Administration 東大寺寺務所, the Oriental Library of Japan 日本東洋文庫, Kanrin Shobō 翰林書房, Ōtsuka Kōgei Shinsha 大塚巧藝新社, and Asukaen 飛鳥園. In addition to Gustav Ecke and Ernst Boerschmann mentioned above, Laurence Sickman 史克曼 (1907-1988 CE), John Calvin Ferguson 福開森 (1866-1945 CE) and Osvald Sirén 喜龍仁 (1879-1966 CE) also appeared among the Western scholars who gave gifts.

<sup>38</sup> The circumstances of this invitation were recorded in Chu Chi-chien 1931, 14.

對於遺物，如科學的之調查，為之實測製圖，作秩序的之整理諸端，日本方面雖亦未為熟練，敢效犬馬之勞也。<sup>39</sup>

In contrary to claims that Itō was arrogant to suggest such a division of work between Chinese and Japanese scholars, he was in fact very thoughtful in presenting his plan for cooperation.<sup>40</sup> As a scholar official, Chu's approach to the research of architectural history was in deed deeply rooted in the established tradition of Chinese scholarship, best exemplified by his interest in the *Building Standards* 營造法式, an architectural treatise first printed and circulated in Chongning 崇寧 2 (1103 CE) of the Song 宋 dynasty (960-1127 CE).<sup>41</sup> When Chu Chi-chien founded the Society following his "discovery" of a manuscript copy of the *Building Standards*, he envisioned its main task to be researching this kind of architectural literatures.<sup>42</sup> Textual study based articles certainly filled the first two volumes of the *Bulletin of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture* 營造學社彙刊 during 1930-1931 CE.

This kind of Sino-Japanese collaboration was seen in the "discovery" and subsequent research on Dulesi 獨樂寺,<sup>43</sup> whose Liao 遼 dynasty (916-1125 CE) Shanmen

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<sup>39</sup> Itō Chūta 1930, 8-9.

<sup>40</sup> According to Chu's report of the lecture in the following year, he was still quite on board with Itō's plan. (Chu Chi-chien 1931, 14).

<sup>41</sup> Chu first encountered a manuscript copy of the *Building Standards* at the Jiangnan Library (a.k.a. the "Ding-version 丁本") in 1918 CE when passing through the city of Nanjing. Although Chu immediately recognized the significance of this treatise, his publicizing effort in the following decade or so followed the routes of a traditional collector. After issuing a photolithographic reproduction of the Ding redaction in reduced size in 1919 CE, Chu worked with the renowned philologist Tao Xiang 陶湘 (1871-1940 CE) and put forth a collated edition (a.k.a. the "Tao-version 陶本") in 1925 CE. See Appendix B, "The Building Standards and Foguangsi".

<sup>42</sup> Cheng Li 2009; Chang Qinghua 2012

<sup>43</sup> Xu Subin 2002, 95-101, cf. 105-108. For a recount of the events leading to the "discovery" of the Dulesi, see Ding Yao 2013, 1-9.

山門 (Mountain Gate) and Guanyin'ge 觀音閣 (Bodhisattva Pavilion) were the oldest extant timber buildings known to the public at that time. The site was located in Ji county 薊縣, Hebei 河北 province, just outside the capital city Beiping 北平 (present-day Beijing 北京), but was only stumbled upon by Sekino Tadashi during a trip to the Eastern Mausoleums 東陵 of the Qing 清 dynasty (1644-1912 CE). Soon after the completion of this initial investigation, Sekino informed Chu Chi-chien and his Beiping-based Society about his new discovery. Society member Kan To 闕鐸 (Kan Duo; 1875-1934 CE) provided Sekino with the textual records of Dulesi that he found in a local gazetteer, which he cited in his research as important evidence for dating the structure.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, the Society immediately sent a team to the site to conduct a survey themselves, and their eventual success set the scene for a major shift of events. The effort was led by Liang Ssu-ch'eng, who recently given up his professorship at Northeastern University 東北大學 to embark on his full-time research career in the Society. Liang's field report published in February 1932 CE is often regarded as a milestone for native Chinese scholarship on architectural history.<sup>45</sup> Although Sekino Tadashi published his paper on Dulesi in the same year,<sup>46</sup> Liang was praised for his mastery of traditional Chinese architectural terminology.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Sekino Tadashi 1932, 4; Xu Subin 2002, 53-141.

<sup>45</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1932b. Japanese architectural historians as “discovers” of the site and the source of information that made this study possible did not appear anywhere in Liang's writings or in the accounts by other members involved in this project.

<sup>46</sup> Sekino Tadashi 1932, 1-9.

<sup>47</sup> The projects Liang Ssu-ch'eng first took up at the Society include research on the *Building Calculations* 營造算例 and *Selected Examples of Construction Methods* 工程做法則例 (hereafter *Construction Methods*).

In addition, as architecture graduate from the University of Pennsylvania, the beautiful watercolor renderings of the plan and elevation drawings produced from the investigation unmistakably reflected the Beaux-Arts education Liang received at Penn under Paul Cret (1876-1945 CE). Liang's calculations of the strength and loading of beams may have employed his knowledge of architectural mechanics. The investigation methods of surveying and the use of photographic documentation, however, were arguably inspired by Japanese scholarship. In contrast to the architectural programs in Japan that offered courses on "On-site Surveying (Jap. 実測)",<sup>48</sup> the Cret-style curriculum did not incorporate such training.<sup>49</sup> It is not clear where Liang mastered such skills. According to the report, he borrowed survey tools from a professor at the Department of Engineering of Tsinghua University, and travelled with two assistants.<sup>50</sup>

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See Ding Yao 2013, 1-9; Lai Delin 2001, 90-99; id. 2009b, 55-64; id. 2011a, 126-127; id. 2014a, 74-79.

<sup>48</sup> The "Survey Method 測量術" had been a required subject since the "building construction major 造家学科" was offered at the College of Engineering 工学寮 (l.k.a. 工部大学校), established in the early Meiji era (Nihon Kenchiku Gakkai 2001, 1801-1814). It remained a requirement when the field underwent reform and was subsequently renamed "architecture major 建築学科". Liu Tun-chen 劉敦楨 (Liu Dunzhen; 1897-1968 CE), who later became co-chair of the Society alongside Liang Ssu-ch'eng, attended the Tōkyō National College of Technology 東京高等工業学校 (l.k.a. Tōkyō Institute of Technology 東京工業大学) between 1916 and 1920. It was clear from the major requirements at the time (ibid., 1864) that Liu learned about surveying methods. When Liu started teaching in the National Central University 國立中央大學, he made some early attempts to include surveying into architectural education in China. In 1929, Liu led his students on a summer investigation through Shandong, Hebei, and Beijing, and published a primary report on their department journal *The Engineer* 工學 in the following year (Xu Subin 2009 b, 61-65).

<sup>49</sup> A full curriculum of 1928 was published in Lai Delin 1996, 27. It clearly reflected the Beaux-Art emphases on "Graphics" (Descriptive Geometry, Shades & Shadows, and Perspective) and "Drawing" (Freehand, Water Color and Historic Ornament). For a further discussion on the Beaux Art training of watercolor rendering and its influence on Chinese architectural education, see Ruan Xing 2002, 30-47.

<sup>50</sup> The two assistants that traveled with Liang include another Society member Shao Ligong 邵力工 (1904-1991 CE), and his little brother Liang Sida 梁思达 (1912-2001 CE), who was studying economics at Nankai University 南開大學, located in the nearby city of Tianjin (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1932b). Shao received two years of correspondence education in engineering and architecture from the Ohio State University, and

It was around 1932 CE that Chu Chi-chien decided to change the main objective of the Society from archival research to field surveys. He wrote to the Board of Trustees of the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education & Culture 中華教育文化基金董事會 explaining the subsequent changes in their research focus:

For the plan of the coming year, [we] intend to focus on the research of extant buildings, adopting measuring surveys and photography as the research methods. [...] This approach resulted from a reexamination of the working principles of the Society. The results will make unprecedented contributions to the academe of our nation.

至於來年工作大綱。將以實物之研究為主。測繪攝影則為其研究之方途。[...] 此種研究法在本社為工作方針之重新認定。而其成績則將為我國學術界空前之貢獻。<sup>51</sup>

In addition, Chu Chi-chien wrote about entrusting the Society to young scholars like Liang:

The art of Chinese architecture had become an ancient knowledge lost to the modern world. There are only a few capable to shoulder the reorganization of [this knowledge]. Your humble servant is fond of this subject, but [he] is not an expert. [...] Nevertheless, [he] was never negligent in the search for talented persons to carry out small-scaled experiments. [...] The Society now consists of two departments. The Department of Construction Methods has appointed Mr. Liang Ssu-ch'eng, a former chair and professor at the School of Architecture of Northeastern University, as its Chair. The Department of Archival Research is planning to appoint Mr. Liu Tun-chen, professor at the School of Architecture of Central University, as its co-Chair. [...] These two gentlemen are young architects with teaching experience, who are fond of antiquity yet up-to-date with current knowledge. Both of them have solid scholastic training and, in my humble opinion, investigate Chinese architecture with meticulous care. [I] took great delight in informing you that we have these two men, from the South and the North respectively, as the successors of the Society.

夫中國之建築已成絕學。之整理非少數人所能肩任。鄙人雖篤嗜此道却非專

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graduated in 1925.

<sup>51</sup> Chu Chi-chien 1932, 162-163; punctuation is mine.

家。[...] 而物色專攻之人材以作小規模之試驗亦未嘗稍懈。[...] 於社內分作兩組。法式一部聘定前東北大學建築系主任教授梁思成君為主任。文獻一部則擬聘中央大學建築系教授劉敦楨君兼領。[...] 兩君皆青年建築師。歷主講席。嗜古知新。各有根底。就鄙人聞見所及精心研究中國營造。任吾社衣鉢之傳者。南北得此二人。此可欣然報告於諸君者也。<sup>52</sup>

The Society's entering a new stage, however, also corresponded with the increasing of a dark cloud cast by Sino-Japanese conflict, which started to overshadow collaboration efforts between the scholars of these two countries.

With the Manchurian Incident in 1931 CE, and in the wake of the Shanghai Incident in 1932 CE, members of the Society were exposed to war trauma on a very personal level. One of Liang Ssu-ch'eng's younger brothers, Liang Ssu-chung 梁思忠 (Liang Sizhong; 1907-1932 CE), served as a Colonel of Artillery in the 19th Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army, passing away at the age of 25 during a battle against the Japanese in Shanghai.<sup>53</sup> On June 14, 1932 CE, in a letter addressed to Hu Shih 胡適 (Hu Shi; 1891-1962 CE), Liang Ssu-ch'eng's wife and colleague "Phyllis" Lin Huei-yin 林徽因 (Lin Whei-yin; Lin Huiyin; f.k.a. 林徽音; 1904-1955 CE) mentioned the distress brought upon the Society's researchers by the Shanghai Incident. In closing, she wrote:

Ssu-ch'eng was out on a field trip again. This time it is about a timber structure from the early Song [dynasty], located in Baodi county. It may even be earlier than the Dulesi of Ji county. People seldom pay attention to this kind of research. We are intently waiting for the publishing of his detailed survey drawings and report, and for the utter bliss when [the finding] gives the Japanese devils a scare. [It shall] stop them from being so proud and haughty, thinking that they can bully China as they please.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 161-162; punctuation is mine.

<sup>53</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1964, 79-81.



思成又跑路去，這次又是一個宋初木建——在寶坻縣——比薊州獨樂寺或能更早。這種工作在國內甚少人注意關心，我們單等他的測繪詳圖和報告印出來時嚇日本鬼子一下痛快痛快，省得他們目中無人，以為中國好欺侮。<sup>54</sup>

The building Lin referred to is the Sandashidian 三大士殿 (Three Mahāsattvas Hall) of Guangjisi 廣濟寺 (a.k.a. West Great Monastery 西大寺) in Baodi 寶坻 county, Hebei province.<sup>55</sup> It turned out to be a Liao structure, and Liang believed its date to be around Tonghe 統和 23 (1005 CE) based on a Liao stele found on site, dated to Taiping 太平 5 (1025 CE).<sup>56</sup>

In the following year, the Society surveyed the Longxingsi 隆興寺 complex in Zhengding 正定, Hebei province and the Huayansi 華嚴寺 (Avatamsaka Monastery) and Shanhuasi 善化寺 in Datong 大同, Shanxi province, which offered them examples of architecture from the Song, Liao and Jin dynasties. Afterwards, the Society expanded their investigations to Shanxi, Shandong, Hebei, Henan, Shaanxi, Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, surveying extant buildings and making “discoveries” about previously overlooked sites.<sup>57</sup> The extensive fieldwork conducted by both Japanese and Chinese scholars searching for extant antique buildings evolved into an unspoken competition, framed by heightened wartime nationalism. This the lead-up to the peak event of the “discovery” of the Foguangsi in 1937 CE, just before the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and

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<sup>54</sup> Lin Huei-yin 1932.

<sup>55</sup> In a report published in December 1932 CE, Liang detailed the sequence of events leading to the field trip to Baodi. Liang recalled learning about a building “structurally similar to Dulesi” from a Baodi county native, named Wang Muru 王慕如, who was working as an instructor at the Normal School of Ji County 薊縣鄉村師範學校 when Liang went to survey the Dulesi (Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1932d, 1).

<sup>56</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1932d, 12.

<sup>57</sup> Cheng Li 2013.

the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

#### DISCOVERING THE FOGUANGSI

While Chinese scholarship has generally acknowledged that the Society was indebted to their Japanese peers for discovering the Dulesi,<sup>58</sup> the “discovery”, the investigation of the Foguangsi half a decade later is still usually regarded as a Chinese achievement from beginning to end. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, there are calls for the event of the Foguangsi’s discovery to be reconsidered, most notably by Vimalin Rujivacharakul who claims that Itō Chūta was the first architectural historian to visit the Foguangsi in 1902 CE. However, Itō never set foot on the site.<sup>59</sup> In fact, based on his travelogues, Itō went to the central tourist area of Mount Wutai in 1920 but did not venture to the Foguangsi, which lies in a remote pocket on the outskirts of the South Range.<sup>60</sup> Rujivacharakul’s misreading also led her to believe that Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定 (1870-1945 CE) and Sekino Tadashi were subsequent visitors to the site, and that they were the first to recognize the Buddha Hall as a Tang dynasty relic.<sup>61</sup> Again, we can also

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<sup>58</sup> Xu Subin 2002, 53-141; Ding Yao 2013, 1-9.

<sup>59</sup> Rujivacharakul referred to Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi for such a claim (Vimalin Rujivacharakul 2006, 242), but a reexamination of the references revealed these two authors never asserted that Itō Chūta travelled to the Foguangsi.

<sup>60</sup> Itō Chūta’s traveling notes are in the collection of Architectural Institute of Japan 日本建築学会, through which his itinerary can be reconstructed. See Itō Chūta 1990, vol.1, 161-171; cf. Itō Chūta 1902, 253-284. It is also evident from several published essays on Mount Wutai by Itō that he never traveled to the Foguangsi in his later trips in China. See, for example, Itō Chūta 1922, 713-732; id. 1942.

<sup>61</sup> As evidence that Japanese scholars took note of the architecture of the Foguangsi, Rujivacharakul provided a photo plate showing a building’s exterior, with the caption “Fig 4.23 Bracket System of the Foguang Temple’s Main Hall. Source: Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi, *Shina Bunka Shiseiki*.” (Vimalin Rujivacharakul 2006, 243). However, it is the Main Hall of the Upper Huayansi 上華嚴寺 in Datong that was shown in the picture (for the original photo, see Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1926a, vol.2, 49; with

conclude from their travel records that none of them had ever been to the Wutai Mountains, let alone the Foguangsi.<sup>62</sup>

Given the significance of the Foguangsi, it is important to clarify some of the misunderstandings in previous studies of its historiography. At the outset, Mount Wutai was by no means an obscure site under the Qing Empire. It was continually seen as the sacred adobe of Mañjuśrī, and was further transformed into an important pilgrimage destination for Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism.<sup>63</sup> However, the Wutai area was already re-centered around the town of Taihuai 臺懷, a destination early traveling scholars had frequently visited. For example, when Itō Chūta travelled through the region in 1902 CE, he recorded visiting the Great Xiantongsi 大顯通寺, Pusading 菩薩頂 (Bodhisattva Peak), Cifusi 慈福寺, Luohousi 羅喉寺, Tayuansi 塔院寺, Shuxiangsi 殊像寺, Nanshansi 南山寺 and Wanfusi 萬壽寺.<sup>64</sup> All of these sites were located in Taihuai or near the five surrounding peaks, but none of them have architectural remains from the pre-Yuan 元 dynasty period. Another architectural historian who missed the Foguangsi was Ernst Boerschmann, who travelled to Mount Wutai in 1907 CE. Boerschmann only stayed in the

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accompanying commentary in id. 1926b, vol.2, 58-59; reprinted in id. 1938a, vol. 1, 77; with accompanying commentary in id. 1938b, vol. 1, 50-52). In addition to those discussed here, Rujivacharakul's thesis has other errors, such as claiming the Nanchansi 南禪寺 as Liang Ssu-ch'eng's other "discovery".

<sup>62</sup> For a comprehensive study of Sekino's ten trips to China, see Xu Subin 2002, 53-141; cf. Sekino Tadashi Kenkyūkai 2009. Tokiwa traveled to China for five trips during 1917-1929 CE, and recounted his travel routes in Tokiwa Daijō 1938.

<sup>63</sup> For a comprehensive study of the religious culture of Mount Wutai during the Qing dynasty, see Wen-shing Lucia Chou 2011. Additionally, the *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* devoted its entire Issue 6 (December 2011 CE) to the topic of "Wutai Shan and Qing Culture", featuring a collection of articles from eleven contributors.

<sup>64</sup> Itō Chūta 1990, vol.1, 161-171.

town of Taihuai, and did not have time to venture further, as he was occupied with the surveying of the two major monasteries of Xiantongsi and Baitasi (a.k.a. Tayuansi).<sup>65</sup>

The first modern study that mentioned the Foguangsi was a report by Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙 (1883-1939 CE), written in Taishō 11 (1922 CE) upon his return to Japan from a pilgrimage in the Wutai Mountains.<sup>66</sup> As a monk scholar from the Kōmyōji 光明寺 in Kamakura 鎌倉, Ono was best known for his efforts in the compilation of the *Taishō Revised Tripiṭaka* 大正新脩大藏經.<sup>67</sup> However, he was also self-taught in Buddhist art, explaining his motives for visiting Mount Wutai as:

Generally speaking, the motives behind my decision to embark on this pilgrimage to Mount Wutai is related to the investigation of the stone Buddha [statues] in the two prefectures of Ōita and Saga [the investigation of which I participated in] in August of last year, organized by the Ministry of Education and the Imperial Fine Arts Academy. Somehow, [I] wanted to find some reference materials, and then saw records about the Five Buddha [statues] at the Jin'gesi in the *Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* by Master Jikaku (a.k.a. Ennin; 794-864 CE). Additionally, [I] was driven by curiosity when I saw the unique place named “Stone Buddha” [village] in the maps [of Wutai] made by the Land Survey Department. At the same time, it was around the one-year memorial of my late mother, and the seven-year memorial of my late wife and eldest son, and instead of holding Buddhist

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<sup>65</sup> Eduard Kögel 2015, 95-115. Several maps published in Ernst Boerschmann 2012 marked the location of Foguangsi. However, it is clear from Boerschmann accounts that he did not personally produce the maps. They were drawn relatively late in the 1940s by his hired topographer.

<sup>66</sup> According to a later account by Ono, he submitted manuscripts about his Mount Wutai investigations to various places for publication, including the *Tokyo Daily News* 東京日日新聞, among others. To my knowledge, the earliest scholarly article that mentioned the Foguangsi appeared on the *Journal of Buddhist Studies* 佛教學雜誌 in Taishō 11 (1922 CE), followed by an article devoted to the study of clay statues in the Foguangsi in *Asian Philosophy* 東洋哲学 in Taishō 12 (1923 CE), see Ono Genmyō 1922a, 746-749; id. 1923, 41-47. Ono Genmyō continued to work with this group of materials, and included sections on Mount Wutai and the Foguangsi in his survey books such as *Research on the History of Mahayana Buddhist Art and Buddhist Art* 大乘仏教芸術史の研究. See Ono Genmyō 1927, 204-273, and id. 1929, 264-271, for example.

<sup>67</sup> Sakai Eishin 1977, 1-17.

ceremonies for the service, [I] wanted to pay homage to a sacred site [in memory of them].

一體私が此の度五台山の参拜を思ひ立った、動機にきましては、それは昨年八月に文部省帝國美術院の事業として企圖せられた大分佐賀兩縣下の石佛調査と關聯して、何等かの參考資料を得たい、それには慈覺大師の入唐求法巡禮記の中に見れる金閣寺の五佛の記事や、且つ陸地測量部作製の地圖に石佛といふ地名があつたので、尠なから好奇心を煽られたので、一面には亡母の一週忌、前妻並に長男の七週忌に相當致しまするので、それ等の佛事供養に代へて靈地に御参りをしたいと考へたかれてありました。<sup>68</sup>

Ono's knowledge of ancient monasteries in the Wutai region was obviously enhanced by his mastery of Buddhist texts, including the travelogues of Japanese pilgrim monks.<sup>69</sup>

Although discouraged by pilgrims who returned from Mount Wutai and told him that the trip would not yield any academic discoveries, Ono was determined to go.<sup>70</sup> Guided by Ennin's diary, Ono went to the rarely visited Foguangsi, the ruins of Dali Fahuasi 大歷法華寺 and Dali Lingjingsi 大歷靈境寺, among other sites.

It is important to note that Ono was primarily interested in Buddhist sculptures, and in the above cited article recounting his Wutai pilgrimage trip, he only included one sentence about the extant architecture at the Foguangsi, saying "to date, it is still a grand monastery, covering a rather expansive ground, with buildings including the Buddha Hall that are particularly splendid".<sup>71</sup> Hirata Atsushi 平田饒 (d.u.), a journalist at the

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<sup>68</sup> Ono Genmyō 1922a, 735-736.

<sup>69</sup> He was also aware of the mural painting of Mount Wutai preserved in the Dunhuang Grotto, and included a photograph in his plates (Ono Genmyō 1922a, plate 1). The photo was different from the published image in *Les Grottes de Touen-houang* (Paul Pelliot 1921, vol.4, 73, Pl. CCXXIV), but its authorship is unclear.

<sup>70</sup> Ono recalled meeting with several returned pilgrims before leaving for the trip (Ono Genmyō 1922a, 736). Like many travelers before them, these pilgrimages were probably limited to the town of Taihuai and the Five Peaks, and therefore they believed there was no ancient building left in the Wutai area.

<sup>71</sup> Ono Genmyō 1922a, 748.

Beijing-based *Shuntian Times* 順天時報 who traveled with Ono and prepared most of the photographs, gave the following comments on the Foguangsi:

This monastery was a renowned Buddhist establishment during the Tang dynasty, but now only a stone [sūtra] pagoda in front of the Mañjuśrī Hall and a stone sūtra pagoda in front of the Great Buddha Hall are extant; they enjoy widespread admiration. The central and side Buddhist statues housed inside the Great Buddha Hall were all sculpted in the Tang dynasty. The Buddhist statues of the remaining halls were generally restored during the Ming and Qing dynasties. There was not much to see in the newly sculptured statues.

該廟為唐代有名寺院、現存者、僅文殊殿前有石塔一座、大佛殿前有石經塔一座、皆為世所稱道者、大佛殿正中及兩旁所供之佛像、皆唐代所塑、其餘各殿之佛像、大部皆明清重修、另塑者無甚可觀。<sup>72</sup>

Hirata's neglect of architectural remains echoed Ono's judgment and his choice to mention the monastic buildings only in passing. Ono devoted much attention to clay statues and sūtra pillars in his report, and published a more extensive study on the Buddhist sculptures of the Foguangsi in the following year.<sup>73</sup>

In the fifth volume of *Buddhist Monuments in China* 支那佛教史蹟 published in Taishō 17 (1928 CE), Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi included an entry on the Foguangsi, and reprinted six of Ono's photographs in the plates, supplemented by three extra ones taken in Taishō 14 (1925 CE).<sup>74</sup> It is clear that Tokiwa and Sekino were informed of the site by Ono. In addition, influenced by Ono's research focus, the newly published entry also limited its discussions to the clay sculptures and the two sūtra-pillars

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<sup>72</sup> Hirata Atsushi 1922, 808.

<sup>73</sup> Ono Genmyō 1923, 41-47.

<sup>74</sup> Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1928a, vol.5, 24-30; with accompanying commentary in Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1928b, vol.5, 42-45.

located within the complex. The oversight by Tokiwa and Sekino, both renowned art and architectural historians, can only be explained by their unfamiliarity with the site. Indeed, in a revised version of the book series published about a decade later, entitled the *Chinese Cultural Heritage* 支那文化史蹟, the photographs were accompanied with more detailed commentaries, which disclosed that the supplementary photos were taken by the manager of Meilixing Photo Studio 美麗新照相館 in Taiyuan, who was hired by Tokiwa to make the trip to the Foguangsi.<sup>75</sup>

In June 1937 CE, fifteen years after Ono Genmyō, an investigation team consisting of four Society members, including Liang and Lin and their two assistants,<sup>76</sup> arrived at the Foguangsi:

At Tung-yeh [Dongye] we changed to mule-litters to enter the Wu-t'ai [Wutai] mountains by the uncustomary route, along which, unknown to us, lay the temple we sought. Outside the South T'ai [Southern Terrace], about three miles beyond the town of Tou-ts'un [Dou village], we entered the gateway of Fokuang Ssu [Foguangsi], the Temple of Buddha's Light.<sup>77</sup>

Their survey at the Foguangsi continued for about a week.<sup>78</sup> The team then visited nearby sites in the central and the northern terraces before arriving at the nearby Dai county 代縣, where they learned that the Second Sino-Japanese War had broken out several days earlier. Their investigations were cut short by the news. The subsequent journey back to Beiping

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<sup>75</sup> Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1938a, vol. 1, 102-107; with accompanying commentary in id. 1938b, vol.1, 104-107.

<sup>76</sup> These two assistants were Mo Zongjiang 莫宗江 (1916-1999 CE) and Ji Yutang 紀玉堂 (d.u.).

<sup>77</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1941, 384.

<sup>78</sup> See Wilma Fairbank 1994, 7, for the estimation of their work time. They photographed and measured the entire site without the help of modern equipment or the convenience of supporting facilities. Scaffolding was only made in order to observe the inscription on the roof truss.

was long and difficult, and the measured drawings of the site eventually survived even more twists and turns.<sup>79</sup> The Society were then relocated with other research and education institutions in avoidance of the military conflict, zigzagging southward to Changsha 長沙, only to be uprooted again and forced to escape further southeast.<sup>80</sup> The Society finally arrived in a small village outside Kunming 昆明 in 1938 CE, where they were still dodging air raids and finding time to work in between.<sup>81</sup>

The Western audience was first introduced to the Foguangsi in 1937 CE, when a Society member, the German-born art historian Gustav Ecke,<sup>82</sup> published a short summary of the fieldwork carried out by the Society between the spring of 1932 CE and the spring of 1937 CE in *Monumenta Serica*. Ecke reported that Liang's investigation was "inspired by earlier reports on Tang sculpture in this temple", as well as by the presence of the monastery in the mural painting of Cave 61 (Paul Pelliot himself numbered it as Cave 117) at Dunhuang.<sup>83</sup> This brief disclosure was followed by a short field report by Liang in *Asia* in 1941 CE, entitled "China's Oldest Wooden Structure".<sup>84</sup> A more detailed two-part study came forth in lithographic-printed handwritten manuscripts in 1944-1945 CE, in the seventh and last volume of the *Bulletin of the Society for Research in Chinese*

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<sup>79</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944, 14-17.

<sup>80</sup> Wilma Fairbank 1994, 101-105.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 106-113.

<sup>82</sup> Gustav Ecke taught at the Tsinghua University and then Fugen University 輔仁大學 in Peking (Pierre Jaquillard 1972, 114-118), and was a member of the Society since 1931 CE (see note 37).

<sup>83</sup> Gustav Ecke 1937, 448.

<sup>84</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1941, 384-387.



*Architecture*.<sup>85</sup> In Liang's two field reports, even though the expedition to the Foguangsi was recounted in considerable length and in rich detail, it did not mention how the researchers learned of the site.

Based on the timeline I laid out above, two points should be recognized. First, it is important to acknowledge the roles played by French and Japanese scholars in the finding and disclosure of the Foguangsi. In addition to Gustav Ecker's report, Wilma Fairbank also attributed Pelliot's photographs as Liang's source.<sup>86</sup> Although Liang did not cite Pelliot explicitly, it is clear that he was aware of the six-volume *Les Grottes de Touen-houang*, published between 1920 and 1924 CE, and which remained the only published material on this subject until the mid-1900s CE.<sup>87</sup> Liang wrote to Pelliot to inquire about Dunhuang in 1932 CE, as soon as he moved to Beiping and took up office in the Society.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, as

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<sup>85</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944; id. 1995. The two issues of the seventh volume of the *Bulletin of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture* were published as lithographic printed handwritten manuscripts, due to the Society's severe lack of funding (Luo Zhewen 1986, 135-136). Two major revised versions of Liang's reports were reprinted in 1953 and 2001 CE respectively (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1953; id. 2001). Although many changes were made to rewrite it in "modern Chinese language" in the 1953 CE version, there was no update regarding the data collected or an analysis of such data. On the contrary, many illustrations in the 1944-45 CE articles were left out, and it was not until its reprint in 2001 CE that the editors added photographs to rectify the omission (see the editors' note 3 by Luo Zhewen in Liang Ssu-ch'eng 2001).

<sup>86</sup> Wilma Fairbank 2008, 94.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Pelliot 1921, vol.4, 73, Pl. CCXXIV: "Touen-houang - Grotto 117. Paroi du fond, panorama du Wou-t'ai-chen (4)." Note that there are more than one "Panoramas of Mount Wutai (五臺山圖)" murals extant. According to Du Doucheng, Caves 9, 61, 144, 159, 222 and 361 of the Dunhuang Grotto contains "Panoramas of Mount Wutai" murals dating from the mid-Tang to the Five Dynasties period, with Cave 61 believed to have the most elaborate version (Du Doucheng 1990, 508). Although Liang highly valued the Dunhuang site, he never had a chance to travel there himself (Xiao Mo 1986, 201-206).

<sup>88</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1932e, 123-129. Liang probably first came across the book series much earlier, either during his education at the University of Pennsylvania in 1924-1927 CE, or upon embarking on graduate research in 1928 CE at Harvard University, where he explored the library collection for materials relevant to Chinese architecture. Liang had already developed an interest in architectural history while studying design at the University of Pennsylvania, where Pelliot's books were in the collection. According to Fairbank, at

a Society member, Ecke's account was quite valuable in mentioning "earlier reports on Tang sculpture" at the Foguangsi as an additional clue to its importance.<sup>89</sup> According to Fairbank, Liang was aware of the collaborated work by Tokiwa and Sekino by 1932 CE,<sup>90</sup> while Liang's correspondence with Pelliot in May that year also confirms this information.<sup>91</sup> Thus, it is also clear that the *Buddhist Monuments in China* must have been another clue that led the Society to the Foguangsi.<sup>92</sup>

Secondly, it is also important to point out the contributions by Liang and his colleagues in the "discovery" of the Foguangsi. As Nancy S. Steinhardt has suggested, "discovery" in this context does not mean that the building was unknown—it means that the building was known primarily to the local population, which used it for worship or other purposes.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, locals were well aware of the existence of the Foguangsi. When Ono was travelling on Mount Wutai in the 1920s CE, he noted that, "even the horse buggy

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least by 1928 CE, Liang would have acquainted himself with the work after an intensive reading period under the guidance of Langdon Warner at Harvard University (Wilma Fairbank 2008, 29).

<sup>89</sup> Gustav Ecke 1937, 448.

<sup>90</sup> Wilma Fairbank 2008, 29-30 and 51.

<sup>91</sup> Liang wrote to Pelliot inquiring about the wooden façade he saw in one of Pelliot's photographs of the Dunhuang Grotto. In his reply, which Liang cited in the article, Pelliot pointed out that although Tokiwa and Sekino believed no wooden structure prior to 1038 CE had survived in China, he was able to refute their viewpoint with the dated wooden structures he found at Dunhuang. Liang explained that Pelliot was referring to Tokiwa and Sekino's book series, and Chongxi 重熙 7 (1038 CE) was the date they attributed to the Bhagavad Sūtra Library 薄伽教藏殿 at the Lower Huayansi 下華嚴寺, Datong, Shanxi province. The wooden façades of caves 120a and 130 (in Pelliot's numbering system) were dated to the Song dynasty, and were built in Kaibao 開寶 9 (976 CE) and Taipingxingguo 太平興國 5 (980 CE) respectively. Both predated the Liao hall. Liang also mentioned that Dulesi, which he had just surveyed, was now the earliest known wooden structure extant in China (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1932e, 123-129; cf. Paul Pelliot 1931a, 221; id. 1931b, 413).

<sup>92</sup> As Rujivacharakul has pointed out, it is the only work jointly written by the two Japanese scholars prior to this date (Vimalin Rujivacharakul 2006).

<sup>93</sup> Nancy S. Steinhardt 2004, 249. Lai Delin expressed a similar opinion on the dispute in Lai Delin 2014c.

drivers know its whereabouts”.<sup>94</sup> In addition, with reference to academic disciplines, “discovery” does not simply equate to “disclosure”. It may sometimes be based on previous sightings, but with new observations and breakthroughs. Gustav Ecke remarked that the “authenticated find of a T’ang wooden building on Chinese soil is an epoch-making discovery”.<sup>95</sup> From his choice of the words “authenticated find” of a Tang “wooden building”, one can discern an emphasized distinction from earlier reports on the statues of the site, and a highlight on the Society’s contribution in ascertaining a Tang dating with epigraphic evidence.

The term “discovery” may suggest an element of chance, and it should be noted that attentiveness and sagaciousness are also its indispensable components. When driving past the Dulesi, Sekino Tadashi took only “one single glance” to spot this ancient temple in an otherwise mundane roadside scene. Likewise, Liang Ssu-ch’eng very likely knew what he was looking for when browsing through photo catalogs compiled by Western and Japanese scholars. In Pelliot’s volumes on Dunhuang grottoes and murals, Liang took notice of a wooden cave façade and predicted it must have been built at a relatively early date. As a Sinologist, Pelliot was not primarily interested in architecture, but he had already “discovered” that the façade were Song structures through epigraphic evidence that bore Song dynasty dates.<sup>96</sup> We may conjecture that Liang was probably much intrigued by the

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<sup>94</sup> This comment was given by Ono in contrast to the obscurity of the Bamboo Grove Monastery 竹林寺. After inquiring after it in vain for days, Ono finally got direction to the site from a senior monk at the Golden Pavilion Monastery 金閣寺 (Ono Genmyō 1922, 767).

<sup>95</sup> Gustav Ecke 1937, 448.

<sup>96</sup> See note 43.

entry on the Foguangsi in Tokiwa and Sekino's work, not because of the sculptures featured in the photographs, but similarly for the glimpse of a wooden structure, which only appeared hazily in the backdrop.

#### THE MAKING OF A TANG ARCHITECTURE ICON

As outlined in the discussion above, the first modern report of the Foguangsi was published by a Japanese monk and self-taught art historian of Buddhist art, Ono Genmyō, who was primarily interested in the clay statues housed in the Buddha Hall of the monastery.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, pioneering efforts concerning on-site investigation and study of the monastic architecture was carried out by a team of four led by Liang Ssu-ch'eng and sponsored by the Society in June 1937 CE on the eve of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The first modern report on the architecture of the Foguangsi was published by Liang in 1941 CE,<sup>98</sup> and elaborated on again in 1944 and 1945 CE.<sup>99</sup> While Shanxi had been an important battleground, the Foguangsi was preserved almost completely intact, against all odds. However, even after the wars ended, Liang primarily was caught up in the rebuilding of the country and the struggles to protect its heritage, followed by the violent political storms of the "new government"<sup>100</sup> and never had a chance to revisit Foguangsi in his lifetime.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ono Genmyō 1922a, 733-803; Ono Genmyō 1922b, 183-209.

<sup>98</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng, 1941.

<sup>99</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944; id. 1945.

<sup>100</sup> For Liang Ssu-ch'eng's post-1949 CE work and career, see Wilma Fairbank 1994, 169-190; and more recently and in greater details, see Wang Jun 2011.

<sup>101</sup> A revised version of Liang's reports was reprinted in 1953 (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1953). Although many

When writing about a separate subject in 1951 CE, Liang pointed to the “Panoramas of Mount Wutai” mural at Dunhuang Cave 61 as the “traveling guide” for their search, thus confirming Gustav Ecke and Wilma Fairbank’s report that Pelliot’s photographs served as Liang’s important sources.<sup>102</sup> Questions remain why Liang never openly acknowledged Japanese scholars’ contributions leading to the Society’s “discovery” of Foguangsi.<sup>103</sup> This decision may have been partially resulted from the political climate of the time. By the 1950s CE, although the Sino-Japanese War had ended but the post-war tensions still existed between the two countries.<sup>104</sup> Meanwhile, we cannot rule out personal reasons that might have infiltrated Liang’s decisions. The war had lasting impact on many Chinese families including the Liang and Lin’s. In addition to losing his younger brother, Liang was further saddened by the death of his brother-in-law (Lin Huei-yin’s younger brother), Lin Heng 林恒 (1916-1941 CE), who fought in the Second Sino-Japanese War as a pilot in the air force of the National Revolutionary Army. Liang Ssu-ch’eng mourned them in an emotionally fraught article in 1964 CE, where he also

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changes were made to rewrite it in “modern Chinese language”, there was no update regarding the data collected or an analysis of such data. In addition, many illustrations in the 1944-45 CE articles were left out, and it was not until its reprint in the *Complete Works of Liang Ssu-ch’eng* that the editors added photographs to rectify the omission. On the decision to supplement photographs, see the editors’ note 3 by Luo Zhewen. Between these two versions of the reports published in 1941 and 1953 CE, Liang Ssu-ch’eng treated the Foguangsi in another paper on architectural representations seen in the Dunhuang murals, see Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1951.

<sup>102</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1951, 6. See Gustav Ecke 1937, 448; Wilma Fairbank 2008, 29-30 and 51.

<sup>103</sup> As I mentioned above, the monk scholar Ono Genmyō authored the first modern study on Foguangsi. However, he was primarily interested in Buddhist statues, and did not recognize the significance of the architecture of Foguangsi. See Ono Genmyō 1922a, 733-803.

<sup>104</sup> During the militarization of the Cold War, China was an alliance with the Soviet Union, while Japan with the United States. With the ongoing Korean War in the early 1950s CE, China and Japan participated with different alliance systems and their confrontations became reheated (Iriye Akira 1990, 624-638).

recounted his family narrowly escaping death in Changsha during a Japanese air raid.<sup>105</sup>

Although born in Japan and spending eleven years of his childhood there,<sup>106</sup> Liang regretted that his love for the country and its people should suffer so much from the Japanese actions of militarism and imperialism in China.<sup>107</sup>

Nevertheless, it should be noted that although Liang Ssu-ch'eng took a great deal of pride in discovering the Foguangsi,<sup>108</sup> he was much reserved when it came to the research on its architecture and evaluation of its significance. In an essay on Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺 in 1963 CE, Liang compared the Golden Hall 金堂 of this Japanese monastery with the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi. Liang introduced both Foguangsi and the nearby Nanchansi 南禪寺 as rare remains of Tang architecture, but at the same time, he also described both as only “secondary or third-tier buildings” in status:

These two Buddha halls were built in the post An-Shi Rebellion era. The warlords rose in power and rebelled one after another, the Li imperial family of the Tang dynasty was politically declining, its people was devastated of their economic powers, and large-scaled renovations and constructions were out of the question. The main hall of the Nanchansi is just a three-bay square, while the main hall of the Foguangsi was only seven-bay wide and four-bay deep. Obviously, they are at the most secondary or third tier halls in status, which could not represent the grandiose

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<sup>105</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1964; For Lin Huei-yin's account of their surviving the Changsha air raid, see Wilma Fairbank 1994, 101-102.

<sup>106</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng's father, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啟超 (Liang Qichao; 1873-1929 CE), was a prominent scholar-official in the Qing dynasty, who led the effort in the so-called “Hundred Days' Reform”. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao fled to Japan in 1898 CE, when the Conservative Coup sought to end the reforms and persecute the reformers. Liang and his family stayed there for the next 14 years. Liang Ssu-ch'eng was born during this period of exile.

<sup>107</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1964.

<sup>108</sup> Liang's excitement was clearly expressed in his field reports. In addition, in a private interview with Lin Zhu on July 8, 2014 CE, the author was told that Liang considered the discovery of the Foguangsi as his greatest contribution to the field of Chinese architectural history.

scale and advanced technologies of Buddhist architecture of the full flourishing period of the Tang dynasty. When we have made this clear, we can then take them as examples of relatively low status, based on which the magnificence and splendor of the principle monasteries of the high Tang period can be conjectured.

這兩座佛殿興建的年代都在安史之亂以後，藩鎮叛亂此呼彼應，李唐政權日益危殆、民窮財盡的時代，大規模的興建已不可能。南禪寺正殿僅僅廣深各三間；佛光寺正殿也不過廣七間、深四間而已。顯然，充其量它們只能算是唐代佛寺中第二、三流的殿堂，是不足以代表唐代全盛時期的佛教建築的壯麗規模和最高成就水平的。首先明確了這點，我們就可以它們為一種較低標準的依據，從而推想唐朝全盛時期主要大寺宏偉莊嚴的氣象了。<sup>109</sup>

Liang also wrote that although the utmost grandeur of Tang architectural achievements was lost on the imperial palace and great monasteries, one could still get a glimpse from the depictions of paradise as illustrated on Dunhuang murals.<sup>110</sup>

It took several generations for the Foguangsi to be elevated as a Tang architectural “icon”, reinforcing the myths surrounding its discovery and even tapping into anti-Japanese sentiment at times. In the process, the “discovery” of the Foguangsi went through an explicit political twist. One contributing narrative was offered by Lin Zhu 林洙 (1928- CE), Liang’s second wife who supported him during the hardships of the Cultural Revolution until his passing in 1972 CE. In her first memoir about Liang published in 1991 CE, she included a section on the “Foguangsi and the Second Sino-Japanese War”, in which she wrote:

The Japanese once predicted with conviction that Tang dynasty timber architecture no longer stood on Chinese soil, and that one has to travel to Nara, Japan to appreciate timber architecture in the Tang style. However, Ssu-ch’eng had always

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<sup>109</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1963 a, 38

<sup>110</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1963 a, 32-58; cf. id. 1963 b, 77-100.

believed that there must be Tang dynasty timber architecture extant within the country. [...] In June 1937 CE, four travelers including Liang Ssu-ch'eng, Mo Zongjiang, Lin Huei-yin, and Ji Yutang<sup>111</sup> [...] arrived near Dou village on an early evening, where they saw the Foguangsi in the distance.<sup>112</sup> With a single glance of the main hall's appearance,<sup>113</sup> they could not contain their amazement, because no building later than the Tang dynasty would have the kind of magnificent bracket-sets, and the proportion and shape of the hall. The moment finally came to validate Ssu-ch'eng's steadfast belief that Tang dynasty timber architecture must have survived within the country.

日本人曾断言，中国已不存在唐以前的木构建筑，要看唐制木构建筑，人们只能到日本奈良去。但思成始终有一个信念，相信在国内肯定还有唐代的木构建筑存在。[...] 1937年6月梁思成同莫宗江、林徽因、纪玉堂四人 [...] 黄昏时分到达豆村附近，远远地看到了佛光寺。只瞥了一眼那大殿的外形，他们就已惊喜得再也控制不住了，因为那样雄伟的斗拱 [*sic.*] 和殿的比例、轮廓，唐以后的建筑是决不会有的。思成一向所抱着的国内必有唐代木构建筑的信念，终于得到了证实。<sup>114</sup>

Lin Zhu has been the most outspoken advocate for her late husband, and her nationalistic narrative contributed greatly to the picture of a man who set out on his quests for old buildings in spite of the doubt from Japanese scholars.<sup>115</sup> However, firstly, the accusations Lin Zhu made about the Japanese side are not supported by any evidence. Secondly, for Liang Ssu-ch'eng, instead of “always holding a steadfast belief”, Liang himself once suggested that extant Tang architecture only existed in fantasy.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> See note 76.

<sup>112</sup> It is impossible to see the buildings of the Foguangsi, let alone any details of their bracket-sets, from the Dou village located about 5 *li* away from the monastery.

<sup>113</sup> It is interesting how the “with a single glance” trope parallels with Sekino Tadashi's recount in discovering the Dulesi. See Sekino Tadashi 1932, 1.

<sup>114</sup> Lin Zhu 1991, 54-55.

<sup>115</sup> Lin Zhu repeated this narrative in Lin Zhu 1995. Zhao Chen and other scholars have since picked up this anecdote, see, Zhao Chen 2001, 77-86, for example. The description of Japanese scholars' arrogance, however, has often been taken out of context, and more often than not, it was repeated without citing its original source.

<sup>116</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1932a, 75-114.



Scholars like Han Pao-teh and Zhao Chen have reflected upon the early scholarship of Chinese architectural history and its tendency to construct a selective history of eminent official architecture while dismissing the humbler structures built by locals, problematizing it as a “classicist” or “elitist” bent.<sup>117</sup> Nancy S. Steinhardt takes the case of Liang Ssu-ch’eng and the Foguangsi to discuss the intellectual background behind Liang’s fascination with the prominent Main Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, as well as his disinclination to regard humble structures constructed in the same period, such as the Wulongmiao 五龍廟 (Five Dragon Temple) and the Tiantai’an 天臺庵 (Celestial Terrace Hermitage), as primary subjects for investigation. She points out that Liang held research on Tang architecture to be almost exclusively on high-status buildings.<sup>118</sup>

I started out this thesis project with similar critiques towards Liang’s scholarship. However, as I looked intimately into the study of “Tang dynasty art and architecture” as a whole, the more I realize the difficulties of conducting research under such a broad subject with so few materials. Ho Puay-peng, who challenged the topic in his Ph.D. dissertation about two decades ago,<sup>119</sup> has recently expressed a similar concern:

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<sup>117</sup> Han Pao-teh did not use the term “classicism” *per se*, however, he criticized the narrow scope of scholarly attention on Tang and Song architecture, elevating the period to a “classical period” as a direct response to the Euro-American model for historic studies (Han Pao-teh 1988, 1). Zhao Chen is the first scholar that explicitly referred this practice as “classicism” (Zhao Chen 2001).

<sup>118</sup> Nancy S. Steinhardt 2004, 227-253. Recent opportunities have allowed in-depth study to be carried out on these previously understudied sites as well. For example, my friend and colleague Li Jingyang in Tianjin University has embarked on a research project on the Celestial Terrace Hermitage.

<sup>119</sup> Ho Puay-peng’s Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Chinese Buddhist Monastic Architecture in the Sui and Tang Dynasties: A Study of the Spatial Conception” offered the most comprehensive study of the spatial formation of Buddhist monasteries during the Sui and Tang dynasties to date (Ho Puay-peng 1992).

To date we know of about five wooden structures from the late Tang period. Putting it in context, it is said that there are 4,600 major monasteries and more than 40,000 minor monasteries that were destroyed during the persecution initiated by [Emperor] Wuzong between 840-845 [CE]. The size of a major monastery at the time could consist of 6-96 cloisters, each cloister is said to be of the size of a minor monastery. Assuming the average for large monastery consists of 10 cloisters, and each cloister has one major hall, we thus have 46,000 halls in the major monasteries and 40,000 halls in minor monasteries. All together we might have 86,000 halls existing at the time in mid-ninth century, but only 5 Buddhist halls are extant. We cannot possibly discern patterns and variations of architecture in such a small sampling of architecture and refer to it as the Tang style, making the five [...] as representation of 86,000 Buddhist halls that once existed and many more throughout the 289 years of the Tang.<sup>120</sup>

The limitation of sample size was one of the reasons that propelled my decision to write a site monograph rather than a dynastic overview. Therefore, the methodology employed in this thesis will be that of a case study, an intensive, contextual examination of the single case of Foguangsi. Although my main research focus is Foguangsi, as my investigation progressed, I had to frequently step back to examine trends in the broader historical context, and it became clear that in-depth analysis of a case can effectively reveal new and important implications that have not been exposed in prior research.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The copious scholarship on Foguangsi might give the impression that little of substance remains to be contributed,<sup>121</sup> but such an impression is unwarranted. To be

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<sup>120</sup> Ho Puay-peng 2015.

<sup>121</sup> Since Liang's investigation of the site in 1937 CE and subsequent reports published in both Chinese and English (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1941, 384-387; id. 1944, 13-61; id. 1945, 1-20), introductory writings intended for a general audience on the monastery were mostly based on his initial fieldwork and findings, represented by three short essays by Chai Zejun published in 1982 and 1986 CE, as well as a pamphlet entitled *The Foguangsi* he wrote for the "Chinese Cultural Relics Pocket Book Series" in 1984 CE, on behalf of the

precise, virtually no effort was made for a further systematic on-site survey since the initial investigation carried out by Liang Ssu-ch'eng,<sup>122</sup> a neglect that can be glimpsed through the statement made by Luo Zhewen in 1964 CE, who, upon discovering previous unreported information, confessed he “looked with closer attention” only due to unexpected rain that trapped him in the monastery for several days.<sup>123</sup> The situation resulted from the monastery's enlistment as one of the “First Group of Key National Cultural Protection Units”,<sup>124</sup> making it almost impossible for “outsiders” to embark on in-depth surveys without applying for administrative approval and complying with strict procedures.

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Shanxi Research Institute for Architectural Conservation (Chai Zejun 1982, 83-89; id. 1984; id. 1986a, 65-77; and id. 1986b, 17-20). Additionally, the Shanxi Research Institute for Architectural Conservation published lavishly illustrated coffee-table books on the architecture, sculptures and murals of the site. See Shanxi Sheng Gujian Baohu Yanjiusuo 1983 and id. 2007. Prominent architectural historians including Guo Husheng, Su Bai, Fu Xi'nian, Qi Yingtao and Zhang Shiqing wrote short entries on the Foguangsi in major textbooks and general surveys of Chinese architectural history (see Guo Husheng 2003, 134-139; Su Bai 2009b, 61-69; Fu Xi'nian 1986, 181; id. 1988, 234-244.; Zhong Xiaoqing and Fu Xi'nian 2001, 495-499; Qi Yingtao 1992, 157-158; Zhang Shiqing 1999, 359-361). Japanese scholars such as Sawamura Masaru, Sekiguchi Kin'ya and Tanaka Tan introduced Foguangsi art and architecture to the Japanese audience (see Sawamura Masaru 1969, 64-65; Sekiguchi Kin'ya 1975, 53-57; Tanaka Tan 1975; and id. 1978). The site also received much attention in American academia, exemplified by the work of art historian Marilyn M. Rhie as well as architectural historian Nancy S. Steinhardt (see Marilyn M. Rhie 1977; Nancy S. Steinhardt 1991, 27-50; id. 2004, 227-253).

<sup>122</sup> The Cultural Relics Investigation Team of the Yanbei Region revisited the site in 1950 CE, but their major focus was to investigate the post-war status of cultural heritage, and the resulting report was not very detailed. See Zhao Zhengzhi 1951, 177-206. Qi Yingtao and Li Zhujun had the opportunity to undertake a thorough measuring survey of the Foguangsi complex in 1973-75 CE, but the results of their work were never published and therefore have not been able to inform latter studies. I obtained the survey drawings and research logs for this study through my colleagues at Tianjin University. I wishes to thank Prof. Ding Yao from for sharing these precious documents with me. The interview with Li Zhujun was carried out by Liu Xiangyu, to whom I also wish to express my gratitude.

<sup>123</sup> Luo Zhewen 1965, 31.

<sup>124</sup> For more on the preservation of Chines cultural relics, see Shen Chen and Chen Hong 2010; Robert E. Murowchick 2013.

Given the limitations of on-site surveys, it is not surprising then that firsthand materials essential for researchers were either difficult to obtain, requiring updates, or even republished with errors.<sup>125</sup> The most recent investigation was launched by researchers led by Lü Zhou from Tsinghua University. However, the resulting monograph focused on assessing the preservation status of the main Buddha Hall at Foguangsi and proposing a preservation program, rather than bring the architectural historical studies up to date.<sup>126</sup> In terms of text-based analyses of the historical and religious background of Foguangsi, although some improvements were made,<sup>127</sup> there are many more aspects awaiting discovery and publication.

It is remarkable that given the significant status of Foguangsi, previous scholarship on the site is so meager. More surprising, however, is that our understanding of Foguangsi have not been able to keep up with the extremely active development in art, cultural and religious history. Since 2011, I have been able to conduct several seasons of fieldwork in the Foguangsi complex with an investigation team from the Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University. Our fieldwork has already yielded several reports,<sup>128</sup> and in this study, I aim to utilize my first hand date to further some of the

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<sup>125</sup> For example, an inscription on the roof truss has never been transcribed and published with complete accuracy, even though it is crucial to understanding the establishment of the Main Hall. Liang's report first published a line drawing of this inscription, with the first character missing (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944, 60). Rhie followed Liang's report but mistook two other characters (Marylin M. Rhie 1977, 31-36). Transcriptions in subsequent publications have become increasingly erroneous, see Zhang Yingying and Li Yan 2010, 130; Lü Zhou 2011, 217.

<sup>126</sup> Lü Zhou 2011.

<sup>127</sup> Li Yumin 1986, 10 and 27.

<sup>128</sup> Tianjin Daxue Jianzhu Xueyuan et al. 2015a, 6; id. 2015b, 70-76, 85.

exciting findings. While remaining rooted in the traditional perspective and methodology of Chinese architectural history, I also aim to apply a multi-disciplinary approach to my research.

An examination of the current research trends in Tang architecture in China reveals the following common themes: (1) Compilations of catalogues of Tang architectural sites based on literary sources.<sup>129</sup> Efforts to collocate inventories only allow for preliminary analyses, leaving the underlying structures under-researched;<sup>130</sup> (2) An analysis of architectural representations in cave-temple and tomb murals, paintings and sculptures and inferences of Tang architectural practices therefrom;<sup>131</sup> (3) Reconstructions of the form and dimensions of certain Tang architectural projects based on extant textual documentation.<sup>132</sup> Since projects that found their way into the official archival records are rare and often reserved for those of imperial status, the scope of this kind of research is quite limited; (4) Reconstructions of certain Tang architectural sites based on archaeological data, sometimes supplemented by textual evidence.<sup>133</sup>

Although all the types of work mentioned above are the basic building blocks of architectural historical inquiries, they only focus on very narrow source bases. For the

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<sup>129</sup> See Ono Katsutoshi 1989; Zhang Gong 1997; Gong Guoqiang 2006; Li Fangmin 2006. In addition to the above listed monographs, essays published by Annelie Bulling and Alexander Soper are also excellent examples of this type of scholarship, see Annelie Bulling 1955a and 1955b; Alexander Soper 1960.

<sup>130</sup> Li Dehua 2012.

<sup>131</sup> Fu Xi'nian 1986b; Tanaka Tan 1977; Tanabe Yasushi 1931; Lei Dehou [Lothar Ledderose] 1988.

<sup>132</sup> This branch of scholarship is best exemplified by Wang Guixiang, along with several others based in the Tsinghua University. See, for example, Wang Guixiang 2006.

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, Fu Xi'nian 1973 and id. 1998, and Yang Hongxun 1987 and id. 2001.

studies that do integrate available materials, they are often based on common threads such as measurement and module, layout and space, certain elements and formalities, and so forth.<sup>134</sup> Although they have made significant contributions to the field of Chinese architectural history, they typically forgo conversations with other disciplines. The ultimate concern of this research on the Foguangsi is to reconstruct not only its art and architectural, but also its social and religious context in which the art and architecture have been produced. To achieve this goal, I mainly use the approach that equally emphasizes text and artifact, which was advanced by Itō Chūta and remained as the gold standard to date.<sup>135</sup> More over, in my study, I seek to treat literary, religious, art and architectural works as human products that speak of the same complex realities instead of as abstract entities developing in a vacuum. A comprehensive study of the Foguangsi provides insights into threads of contacts between these available materials that were woven in both its historical and regional context and beyond.

#### TEXTUAL STUDY AND CRITICISM

As Edward Said astutely pointed out, texts are “part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted”.<sup>136</sup> By

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<sup>134</sup> See, for example, Fu Xi'nian 2004; Wang Guixiang 1982-1983, id. 2002, id. 2003, id. 2004 and id. 2008; Xu Yitao 2002 and id. 2003; Xiao Min 2006.

<sup>135</sup> Meanwhile, a similar ideal, so-called the “Double Evidence Method (二重證據法)”, was widely popular in the field of Chinese history studies. This method was advocated by the premier historian Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877- 1927 CE), who believed “paper sources (紙上之材料, i.e. textual evidence)” and “underground sources (地下之材料, i.e. archaeological evidence)” should be equally-emphasized and cross-examined.

<sup>136</sup> Edward W. Said 1983, 4.

taking the nature of the sources into consideration, I attempt to determine which accounts are reliable and verifiable, and if they are not, seek how to interpret their agendas. For example, the rise of the Wutai Mountains as Mañjuśrī's sacred realm is not a subject that has lacked attention. On the one hand, there are obvious hagiographic materials that previous scholars have recognized. For instance, in an early-Tang text, the *Record of the Miraculous Instructions [Given by the Deities] to Vinaya Master Daoxuan* 道宣律師感通錄,<sup>137</sup> it was claimed that “anciently, in the time of King Mu of the Zhou 周穆王, the Buddha's teachings were already in existence, and this mountain was a numinous place, the dwelling of Mañjuśrī”.<sup>138</sup> Today we know it would be irrational to trace the recognition of Mount Wutai to King Mu, who reigned in the tenth century BCE, before the time of the historical Buddha.<sup>139</sup> One can speak similarly about another account from a Northern Song text, the *Expanded Record of Mount Qingliang* 廣清涼傳,<sup>140</sup> in which King Yao 堯, who allegedly reigned in the early third millennium BCE, had a vision of Mañjuśrī appearing on the Southern Terrace of Mount Wutai.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> The *Record of the Miraculous Instructions [Given by the Deities] to Vinaya Master Daoxuan* is dated to Qianfeng 乾封 2 (667 CE), and is received in a slightly different version, entitled *Transmission of the Revelation of the Vinaya Incarnation* 律相感通傳 (T45n1898), also attributed to Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667 CE), and dated to Linde 麟德 1 (664 CE). For a comparative study, see Liu Yuan-ju 2013, 130-131.

<sup>138</sup> T52n2107, 0437a-0437b. For an English translation of the passage, see Raoul Birnbaum 1986, 124-125.

<sup>139</sup> Nonetheless, as pointed by Raoul Birnbaum, it was plausible to its contemporary Chinese readers, since in China, the fifty-second year of King Mu's reign (878 BCE) was widely accepted as the date of historical Śākyamuni Buddha's death from the sixth century onward (Raoul Birnbaum 1986, 125). This belief was based on a legend recorded in *Master Lie* 列子. For a translation of the related passage in *Master Lie* and further discussions, see Erik Zürcher 2007, 273-274.

<sup>140</sup> The *Expanded Record of Mount Qingliang* (T51n2099) is compiled by Yanyi 延一 (b. 999 CE) and completed in Jiayou 嘉祐 5 (1060 CE); cf. Table 1.

<sup>141</sup> T51n2099, 1105b. For an English translation of the passage, see Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 41.

On the other hand, however, other sources, which are at least superficially unproblematic, frequently escape historical scrutiny. Consequently, they are accepted uncritically with their legendary elements taken as historical fact. Thus, the emergence of Mount Wutai as a prominent Buddhist site has often been placed in the Northern Dynasties period (439-589 CE), based on materials that bear much earlier dates and references than their time of composition,<sup>142</sup> despite the lack of external evidence otherwise.<sup>143</sup> Particularly, its meteoric rise to fame as a sacred Buddhist mountain circa the mid-seventh century was very peculiar, being completely transformed from a previously obscure place to a utopia that enjoyed imperial patronage and attracted monks and pilgrims.

In Appendix A, through methods of textual criticism, I examine available textual sources and reassesses previously accepted views on the early history of Mount Wutai. My close reading of the major sources demonstrates that the mountain area was first known as Luyi 慮夷 or Lüyi 驢夷, and did not take on the names of “Five Terrace Mountains” or “Clear and Cold Mountain” until the late sixth century during the Sui 隋 dynasty (581-618 CE). It is also clear that the first set of extant texts that mentioned Mount Wutai in reference to Mañjuśrī were all produced around the early Tang period. I argue that the renaming of the site was most likely premeditated in order to establish its association with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, transforming it into the sacred abode of the deity. This appendix

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<sup>142</sup> For instance, in an essay recounting the “history” of Mount Wutai during the Northern Wei and Northern Zhou dynasties, the author only used later sources drawn from the Tang dynasty (Tian Li 1986, 3-6). This problem of using later sources to reconstruct earlier histories will be discussed in more detail below.

<sup>143</sup> It should be noted that in addition to the lack of textual support, no archaeological evidence prior to the Sui and Tang period can be found in Wutai area.



provides an example of my approach to all literary sources used in throughout this study. More importantly, it also sets up a concrete chronology for future discussions concerning the history of the Foguangsi.

In the body chapters of the thesis, the corpus of textual sources I include consists of both received texts and primary sources. The received texts are mainly found in the so-called “Mount Qingliang Gazetteers” — a group of compiled records on Mount Wutai that I introduce later in detail. Scattered references to the Foguangsi and associated monks are seen elsewhere as well, such as in transmitted dynastic histories, unofficial writings and Buddhist literature.<sup>144</sup> Some original manuscripts that contain information about the Foguangsi unearthed from Mogao Cave 17 (“The Library Cave”) at Dunhuang are also invaluable additions to the study. The most relevant ones include travelogues of pilgrims and poems about Mount Wutai, most of which were created during the late Tang or Five Dynasties 五代 period (907-960 CE).<sup>145</sup> The latter group of primary sources consists of

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<sup>144</sup> For annotated anthologies of Mount Wutai poetries and travelogues collected from received texts, see Cui Zhengsen 1989 and id. 1991.

<sup>145</sup> Du Doucheng collected and published most of the Dunhuang literature related to Mount Wutai, most of them in genres of “songs (曲子)” and “eulogies (讚, or 讚文)”. See Du Doucheng 1991. A summary of the four main types of this corpus of literature, listed with numbers of the manuscripts belonging to each category can be found in Lin Yun-jo 2014b, 120-123. A recent study on Wutai literature was published in English by Mary Anne Cartelli (Mary Anne Cartelli 2013). Cartelli has pointed out that the Wutai literature preserved at Dunhuang complies with the definition of “transformation texts (變文)” proposed by Chinese scholars as dealing with miraculous transformations described in Buddhist scriptures, they lack the literary characteristics of transformation texts as defined by Victor H. Mair (Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 10-11). Nevertheless, Victor Mair already brought our attention to transformation texts’ “implicit or explicit relationship to illustrations” (Victor H. Mair 1989, 9-32). Bearing in mind that murals of Mount Wutai found at Dunhuang Grotto (Du Doucheng 1991; see a summarization chart in Lin Yun-jo 2014b, 115-120) may have its origin in the “Transformation Images of Mount Wutai (五臺山化現圖)” (Zhang Huiming 2000, 1-9), it is interesting to consider the possible relations between these songs or eulogies with the murals.

epigraphic sources, mostly from ink inscriptions found on the timber members of monastic buildings, and stone inscriptions on stela, sūtra-pillars, and so forth, as well as inscriptions cast on metal ritual implements.<sup>146</sup>

#### ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

In addition to utilizing textual materials, an important component of this research stemmed from firsthand data collected by the author and a team of investigators from Tianjin University. The guiding principle behind our fieldwork is the methodology of “Building Archaeology (Bauforschung)”.<sup>147</sup> As a discipline that originated in the direct participation of architects in the excavation of architectural remains, Building Archaeology is rooted in Archaeology, with their intersection lying in the observation of layers, or stratification. Compared to traditional “Architectural History (Architekturgeschichte)”, Building Archaeology more extensively draws its information from the structure itself, and therefore is less dependent on textual sources. Through our fieldwork data, we are able to analyze the construction stratifications of the site in question.

Here I include a variety of resources ranging from construction technology to

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<sup>146</sup> Some of the epigraphs and inscriptions written on plaques are collected in Cui Zhengsen and Zhao Lin'en 1993, Cui Zhengsen 1995, Zhou Zhenhua et al. 1993, and Zhang Yingying and Li Yan 2011, 206-259.

<sup>147</sup> Building Archaeology is a concept that first appeared in academic writings in German-speaking countries. The term “Bauforschung” was used for the first time in Armin von Gerkan's paper entitled “Die Gegenwärtige Lage der Archäologischen Bauforschung in Deutschland” (Armin von Gerkan 1924). However, the antecedents of such a tradition can be traced back to the time of the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries, when architects studied the remains of classical monuments by making measured drawings and sketches. As a discipline, it originated out of the direct participation of architects in the excavation of architectural remains in the 19th century CE.

scientific analysis. For example, a notable source is the dendrochronology and carbon-14 dating (hereafter C-14 dating) results of 13 samples collected at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi in 2012 and 2014.<sup>148</sup> (Figure 3) Two earliest elements were found on the bracketing-layer of the structure, namely a “wing-shaped bracket (翼形栱)” made with timber that dated to ca. 607±50 CE, and a piece of straw dated to ca. 676±50 CE that was a part of the plaster decoration on bracket-sets. However, as Xu Yitao, a leading architectural historian in building archaeology, has noted, these smaller components of a structure usually do not reflect the date of the overall structure. It has been a common practice to recycle older timber in new projects, and use them to produce small-sized components.<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, these timbers and straw with early dates from the Sui and early Tang dynasties demonstrate that the Foguangsi probably started to become active during this time.

Columns are said to provide the most reliable samples for the dating of the entire structure. The sheer size of them often require whole logs of raw timber, which are more likely harvested to be used in a certain project in particular. At Foguangsi, three samples have been taken from its columns, and they are dated to ca. 748±50 CE, ca. 965±50 CE and ca. 1152±50 CE respectively. Additionally, a straw sample taken from the clay statues of Buddha housed inside the hall is dated to ca. 750±50 CE. Since clay statues similar to the ones found at Foguangsi undoubtedly post-date its construction, and considering that there

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<sup>148</sup> The tests were preformed by a Peking University laboratory. They based their dating model on Paula J. Reimer et al. 2004, 1029-1058, and Christopher Bronk Ramsey 2005.

<sup>149</sup> Xu Yitao 2014, 91-96.

is a column sample that exhibits roughly contemporary dating results, we may conclude the initial construction of the Great Buddha Hall can be traced to the late-seven to late-eighth century. The other columns are probably from replacement during later renovations of the hall.

Overall, the structure seems to have gone through several major periods of renovations. The first may be some time in late Tang period. The second is likely to have been Northern Song 北宋 (960-1127 CE) or Jin 金 dynasty (1115-1234 CE) period, with samples taken from the roof truss of the structure dated to around 11-12th century. The third period bracket falls in the Ming 明 dynasty (1368-1644 CE). Several samples taken from the name plaque of the hall and the bamboo strips used for decorative purposes date to 16-17th century. These results of C-14 dating demonstrate that building activities at the Great Buddha Hall mirror the whole spectrum of the cultural life of the monastery. These dates are important in the further discussions in the body chapters, in which the examination of inscriptions and texts is key in providing appropriate socio-historical context for these dating results. Together they yield the picture of the ever-changing religious and cultural horizon of the Foguangsi.

## **PART I**

### **THE HISTORY AND POLITICS OF FOGUANGSI UNDER THE TANG**

## CHAPTER 1 ESTABLISHMENT AND EARLY HISTORIES

The reunification of China under the Sui and the Tang was preceded by a prolonged period of division and turmoil. Compared to the Qin 秦 (221-206 BCE) and Han 漢 (206 BCE -220 BC) empires, which reigned more than three hundred years earlier, the cultural and political entity that formed during this period had been struck off-center. Since antiquity, China had regarded itself as the “Central Kingdom (中國)”, encompassing “All under Heaven (天下)”,<sup>150</sup> a Sino-centric worldview only to be shaken by the advent of Buddhism not long before the fall of the Eastern Han.<sup>151</sup> Buddhism, a “foreign” religion, inevitably regarded India (specifically north central India) as its place of origin, and as the center of the universe (Skt. Madhyadeśa, lit. Central Kingdom).<sup>152</sup> Consequently, within this conception, China was pushed to the periphery.

The proliferation of Buddhism in China also brought along its cosmological assumptions, and soon enough, the Chinese found themselves under the sway of what has

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<sup>150</sup> For the latest studies on the developments of worldview in ancient China, see Mark Edward Lewis 2006, Gan Huaizhen 2007, and Zhang Qixian 2009.

<sup>151</sup> On China’s early contact with Buddhism, see Hu Shih 1936, 219-247, Erik Zürcher 2007, Kenneth Ch’en 1973, and Robert Gimello 1978, 52-89, and Robert H. Sharf 2002.

<sup>152</sup> An early account of Madhyadeśa can be found in the *Autobiography of the Eminent Monk Faxian* 高僧法顯傳 (T51n2085), 858a. For a review of the Buddhist geography and cosmology as perceived in Medieval China, see Marc S. Abramson 2008, 75-80. In addition to religious ideology, astronomical arguments, climatological and linguistic evidence were also made to support India’s centrality. As a result, in the Chinese discourse from the third through the seventh centuries, “India, the true Middle Kingdom, was the center point of wisdom and righteousness, the only land onto which awakened beings were born. It was aligned with the heavens, and it balanced the four seasons. Central India’s written and spoken language was divine” (David Jonathan Felt 2010, 9, cf. 5-8). There may have been substantiated factors of scientific, cultural and economic superiority at work as well. For a summary of the glories of Indian civilization at that time, see Samuel Adrian M. Adshead 2004, 93-94.

been termed as the “borderland complex”,<sup>153</sup> a disquiet only to be strengthened by the suffering of the time,<sup>154</sup> and fear for a growing expectation of eschatology (末法).<sup>155</sup> Beyond these semantic conflicts,<sup>156</sup> the construction of China’s own sacred “places” and “monuments” served as a significant battlefield for such cultural antagonism. As Raoul Birnbaum has pointed out, “the establishment of specifically Buddhist sacred mountains, well-known by the seventh century, marks a major step in the development of a uniquely Chinese form of Buddhism”.<sup>157</sup> Within this broader trend, Mount Wutai was the first established Chinese Buddhist mountain where a specific Buddhist deity was believed to dwell and to manifest himself,<sup>158</sup> and it was certainly not a mere coincidence that around the same period, China finally emerged as a new center of the Buddhist cosmos.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Antonino Forte is the first western scholar who adopted this term, see Antonino Forte 1985, 106-134, esp. 122-128. See also Yoshikawa Tadao 1972, 70-86. For some recent reviews and researches on the “borderland complex” issue, see Brian Moloughney 2004, 165-176, Chen Jinhua 2012, 22-41, and Janine Nicol 2014, 27-48. However, with the recentering of the Buddhist world discussed later, the precariousness, reflections and debates did not last long. As pointed out by Ge Zhaoguang, the Chinese civilization may have missed the best chance to broaden their horizons (Ge Zhaoguang 2011, 114-116). For Ge’s account on the post-Tang development of Chinese worldview, see *ibid.*, pages.

<sup>154</sup> For a review of the chaotic military dynasticism, with successions of short-lived regional polities struggling for power, see David A. Graff 2002, 17-120, and Mark Edward Lewis 2009, 54-85. Buddhist communities, though predominately non-governmental organizations during this period, often took on the role of contributing to social infrastructures and providing humanitarian services (Liu Shu-fen 1994, 17-20). This may have gravened feelings of inferiority among the Chinese, and further elevated the central status of India.

<sup>155</sup> For the Buddhist concept of history and eschatology in general, see Jan Nattier 1991, 27-118, for the spread of Buddho-Daoist eschatology in early Medieval China, see Erik Zürcher 1982, 10-22.

<sup>156</sup> One such example is Daoxuan’s *Record of Buddhist Places* 釋迦方志, in which he “affirms India’s geographic centrality, yet simultaneously undermines the importance of that centrality, arguing that Chinese Buddhists were not blighted by their peripheral position, thus providing an antidote to the Borderland Complex” (Janine Nicol 2014, 27).

<sup>157</sup> Raoul Birnbaum 1986, 10.

<sup>158</sup> Yen Keng-wang 2007, 254.

<sup>159</sup> Antonino Fort 1985, 127.

The pivotal role played by Mount Wutai in the recentering of the Buddhist world has been synthesized by Tansen Sen.<sup>160</sup> New materials and fresh perspectives have surfaced throughout the decade since then, and an update is rather necessary. Especially worth noting is a theory endorsed by several scholars that the female ruler Wu Zetian 武則天<sup>161</sup> (a.k.a., Wu Zhao 武曌<sup>162</sup>; 623/625-705 CE; Empress 655-683 CE; Regent 684-690 CE; r. 690-705 CE) of the early Tang was an important player behind the sanctification of Mount Wutai.<sup>163</sup> More importantly however, I demonstrate that Empress Wu was also directly associated with Foguangsi's rise to fame. Before her initiated intensified activities related to Mount Wutai, the six years of “Xianqing 顯慶”, which literally means celebrating the “*xian* (illustrious)”, began with her giving birth to the young prince Li Xian 李顯 (656-710 CE), who was bestowed with a Buddhist title “Prince Foguang 佛光王 (Prince of Buddha's Radiance)”, and ended with her winning over a power struggle and consolidating her power. I explain the reasons behind the naming of Foguangsi and how it

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<sup>160</sup> Tansen Sen 2003, 55-101, esp. 76-86.

<sup>161</sup> “Zetian 則天” is one of the self-fashioning names of Empress Wu, which literally means, “taking heaven as model”.

<sup>162</sup> “Zhao 曌” is among other newly created Chinese character introduced by the Empress in Yongchang 1 (689 CE). She chose it to replace the traditional character “zhao 照” in her personally name. See note 200 below.

<sup>163</sup> There has not been sufficient attention paid to the significant role she played by Empress Wu in fostering the religious institutions at this site. Stanley Weinstein only brushed over the monk Huize's visit in Longshuo 龍朔 1 (661 CE) and attributed it as Gaozong's order. As will be discussed soon, it is clear that Empress Wu was the main patron of Huize. To my knowledge, T. H. Barrett may be the first to speculate that Empress Wutai exerted a significant role in the sanctification of Mount Wutai (T. H. Barrett 2012, 1-64; id. 2012, 46-67; and more extensively in id. 2008). Only until very recently, however, more detailed treatment on Empress Wu's connection with Mount Wutai's early development became available (Ku Cheng-mei 2003, 378-424; Delü 2012, 1-27; and Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 115-120). This chapter seeks to bring new evidence and fresh perspectives into this ongoing discussion.



became an essential factor that garnered patronage from Empress Wu.

After the fall of Empress Wu, Li Xian was reinstated as Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684 CE; reinstated 705-710 CE). His reign saw the establishment of at least two more structures under the name “Foguangsi”, located in the palatial cities of Western Capital Chang’an and Eastern Capital Luoyang, serving as the symbolic “palace chapel (内道場)” of the Tang court. I explain the significance of this choice of location, and examine it in the context of the preexisting Foguangsi on Mount Wutai, which must have been incorporated into the system around that time, allowing Emperor Zhongzong to harness the religious powers of the newly sanctified Buddhist center. Through this highly symbolic gesture, Emperor Zhongzong successfully highlighted his legitimacy as a new Buddhist ruler and promised the renaissance of Buddhist rule. In a wider context, the founding of Foguangsi network underlined an institutionalized Buddhist church that flourished during the Sui and Tang dynasties.

#### **MOUNT WUTAI BEFORE THE FOGUANGSI**

Situated at the northern end of the Taihang Mountain Range 太行山, the site was recognized as a part of the Luyi/Lüyi county through the Han dynasty to the Northern Dynasties period, and had been a place traditionally occupied by non-Chinese in pre-Qin China.<sup>164</sup> Together with the Yan Mountain Range 燕山, a natural extension of the Taihang

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<sup>164</sup> During the Shang and Western Zhou, the northern Shanxi and Shaanxi region was identified as occupied by hostile peoples of Gui Fang 鬼方 and Gong Fang 𤟚方 (Li Feng 2013, 89, 110 and 135). In Eastern Zhou, groups identified as the Di 狄 took hold of the Taihang Mountains, encroaching on indigenous Zhou states (ibid., 178-180).

to the northeast, the Taihang-Yan belt was the major land obstacle that separated China proper from its Steppe neighbors,<sup>165</sup> as the majority of the Chinese population had been living in the drainage basin of the Yellow River and its principal tributaries. Even when the Luyi/Lüyi region came under the control of the states of unified Qin, Han, Wei 魏 (220-265 CE) and Jin 晉 (265-420 CE), it existed as a frontier of these empires.<sup>166</sup> Devastated by a military catastrophe at the end of the Western Jin 西晉 (265-316 CE) period, the region later fell under the control of the Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534 CE), Eastern Wei 東魏 (534-550 CE) and Northern Qi 北齊 (550-577 CE) (Map 1).<sup>167</sup>

By culling through the places frequently mentioned in early Buddhist literature, it is possible to reconstruct the major network of Buddhist sites in north China through the Northern Dynasties period. In addition to capital cities and nearby mountain sites that often hosted religious activities, the Taihang Mountain Range fostered a corridor of Buddhist centers along its eastern side, connecting the major metropolitan areas of Ye 鄴, Luoyang 洛陽 and Chang'an 長安.<sup>168</sup> Renowned mountains in the suburb of capital cities include

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<sup>165</sup> Yen Keng-wang 1986, 116.

<sup>166</sup> For Qin and Han, Xiongnu 匈奴 had emerged as their most powerful enemy (Li Feng 2013, 269-275). During the Western Han, the northern border was by no means stable, constantly being subjected to raids under alternating appeasement and military conflicts (Nicola Di Cosmo 2002, 190-252). By the Eastern Han period, north Shanxi had started to take in Southern Xiongnu who submitted to Han and joined the Chinese campaigns against the Northern Xiongnu (David A. Graff 2002, 47-48).

<sup>167</sup> During the Jin civil war, rebellions by the Xiongnu population residing in North China played an essential role in the downfall of the Western Jin regime (David A. Graff 2002, 48-51). Various states rose and fell during the subsequent age of division, until more than half a century later in 439 CE, when a Tuoba 拓跋 clan of the Xianbei 鮮卑 people again united all of China north of the Yellow River under the Northern Wei (Ibid., 54-75). However, conflicts continued throughout the Northern Dynasties, between the Wei, Qi and Zhou polities (ibid., 97-120).

<sup>168</sup> Yen Keng-wang 2007, 84, 116-118 and 138-139.

the Mount Gu 鼓山 near Ye, Mount Zhongnan 終南山 near Chang'an and Mount Song 嵩山, Mount Longmen 龍門 near Luoyang. The chain of local mountain sites include, from north to south, the historical Mount Heng 恆山, Mount Feilong 飛龍山 (var. Mount Fenglong 封龍山), Mount Gu, Mount Linlü 林慮山, Mount Xi 西山 of Ji Commandery 汲郡, Mount Bailu, Mount Wangwu 王屋山 and Mount Zhongtiao 中條山 (Map 2). Notably, the present-day Mount Wutai region remains outside of this zone. As I discuss in detail elsewhere,<sup>169</sup> despite popular accounts that trace the history of Mount Wutai to the Northern Dynasties period, the creation of the origin myth of the site in reference to Mañjuśrī can be dated to the Sui and early Tang period at the earliest.

The founding emperor of the Sui dynasty Yang Jian 楊堅 (541-604 CE), or Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 581-604 CE), embarked on his unifying process in the late 570s CE, successfully reuniting North China by annexing the Northern Qi, seizing power from the Northern Zhou 北周 (557-581 CE) imperial house and then finally taking over the kingdom of Chen 陳 (557-589 CE) in the South. China again came together politically after nearly three hundred years of disunion. As decedents of semi-nomadic peoples of the northwest, the Sui ruling family established Daxing 大興 near the ruins of Chang'an as its new capital to be situated closest to their allies, with the intention to relocate the Chinese political center that had gradually drifted to the east and south during the period of division.

Sui was known for their approval of Buddhist ideology, with the Sui emperors

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<sup>169</sup> See Appendix A: “The Making of Mañjuśrī’s Mount Wutai”.

being presented as ideal “Buddhist rulers”.<sup>170</sup> The tradition started from the founding emperor Wen, who sanctified mountains throughout his domain and generously supported the Buddhist church.<sup>171</sup> In an edict issued in Kaihuang 開皇 1 (581 CE), he saluted the toughness of mountains that harbor divine spirits and were beloved as dwelling places of recluses and immortal sages, and ordered Buddhist monasteries to be built at the foot of the five famous mountains.<sup>172</sup>

Whereas Emperor Wen promoted the Buddhist mountain cult, and set a precedent for the unique organized Buddhist mountain systems in China that continued to develop in later dynasties,<sup>173</sup> the abovementioned edict followed the “*wuyue* 五嶽” or the Five Marchmounts tradition, an imperially-instituted category formed during the Han

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<sup>170</sup> See Chen Jinhua 2002 (a); Ku Cheng-mei 2003, 155-221; esp. Zhou Yan-fei 2005; and id. 2006. For the political appropriation of the concept of ideal Buddhist rulers in general, see Kang Le 1996, 109-143. Sui emperors’ embracing of Buddhism was partly in order to win support among southern Buddhists.

<sup>171</sup> It was said that the personal background of Yang Jian, born in a Buddhist temple and brought up by the so-called “Divine Nun” Zhixian 智仙 until he was thirteen, was a main factor behind his Buddhist patronage. The legend about Yang Jian’s birth is included in Daoxuan’s *Collection of [the Documents Related to] the Buddho-Daoist Controversies in the Past and the Present* (T52n2104, 379a), completed in Longshuo 龍朔 1 (661 CE). See Chen Jinhua 2002 a, 41, footnote 36, for a brief recount. Yang Jian’s wife, who was a devout Buddhist from the Dugu 獨孤 clan, was also believed to have contributed to the emperor’s predisposition towards Buddhism (Arthur F. Wright 1957, 77-79. Cf. Zhou Yan-fei 2003, 135-151). The most important factor, however, probably lies in the political use of the religion in providing a basis for the homogeneity of the reunified empire and for winning support among southern Buddhists (Arthur F. Wright 1957, 93-104).

<sup>172</sup> *Chronological Record of the Three Jewels* 歷代三寶紀 (T49n2034), 0107b; Stanley Weinstein 1987, 5. Chen Jinhua and James Robson have speculated that Emperor Wen’s preoccupation with mountains might have given birth to his second reign name “*renshou* 仁壽” (lit. benevolence and longevity, 601-604 CE), alluding to Confucius’s famous claim that “the benevolent man delights in mountains (仁者樂山)” (Chen Jinhua 2002 a)

<sup>173</sup> Following Erik Zürcher 2007, 207, James Robson has discussed this theory in length, see James Robson 2009, 52-56. As Arthur F. Wright has noted, this measure may also be seen as complementary to the network of official temples that served as centers for state-supported Buddhism in many areas of North China (Arthur F. Wright 1957, 96-97). I will return to this point later in this chapter.

dynasty.<sup>174</sup> It did not include Mount Wutai, which in all likelihood was not put on the map until the second Sui emperor Yang Guang 楊廣 (569-618 CE), or Emperor Yang 煬帝 (r. 604-618 CE). Emperor Yang was also said to have displayed fondness towards Buddhism at an early age. Once he reached the age of twelve, Yang Guang was posted away from the capital city of Daxing and served as the Commander Duke of Yanmen 雁門郡公.<sup>175</sup> In the following year, when the Sui dynasty was officially founded, Yang Guang remained there, and began to oversee a broader region as the Commander of the Bing Prefecture 并州總管, and remained in these positions until he reached adulthood.<sup>176</sup>

The ambitious Emperor Yang embarked on several momentous imperial expeditions to the South after ascending to the throne, however his most extravagant imperial excursion was the overland tour to the Ordos starting in Daye 大業 3 (607 CE).<sup>177</sup> It lasted more than five months. Emperor Yang chose Yanmen commandery 雁門郡, the very place where Mount Wutai is located, as an important stop on his trip.<sup>178</sup> It was exactly around this period that Luyi/Lüyi adopted as its contemporary name as the “Wutai county”, to be governed under the Yanmen commandery of the Bing prefecture 并州 (roughly

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<sup>174</sup> The “*wuyue*”, or the “Five Sacred Peaks”, generally referred to Mount Tai 泰山, Mount Heng 衡山, Mount Hua 華山, Mount Heng 恆山 and Mount Song 嵩山. See James Robson 2009, 25-52, for the possible origin and early development of the *wuyue* system.

<sup>175</sup> Yanmen 雁門 (f.k.a. Gouzhu 勾注, var. 句注) was one of the key passageways cutting through the northeast turning Taihang Mountain Range, connecting the plateau region with the northern Steppe. A segment of the Great Wall built in the Kaihuang era (581-600 CE) ran along the Xixing 西陁 branch of Taihang Mountains to the north of the commandery. See Yen Keng-wang 1986, 1349, cf. 1335-1366.

<sup>176</sup> Victor Cunrui Xiong 2006, 11-15.

<sup>177</sup> Although regarded as acquired southern sympathies, it should be noted that the predominant orientation of the Sui emperor remained to the North under his reign.

<sup>178</sup> Victor Cunrui Xiong 2006, 39-42.

equivalent to present-day Shanxi province). Under this entry in the *Book of Sui*, the name “*wutaishan* (Mount Wutai)” made a brief debut in official histories.<sup>179</sup> Emperor Yang’s visit of Yanmen area may have been a turning point in the history of Mount Wutai, and his recognition of the significance of this region was deeply rooted in his days as a young prince.

### **EAST OF THE RIVER, WEST OF THE MOUNTAIN**

Under the administrative system of the Tang dynasty, the Wutai county became a part of the Dai prefecture 代州 (var. 岱州), located in the Hedong circuit 河東道,<sup>180</sup> the name literally means “east of the river”, as the geographic area was bounded by the Yellow River turning south and then east from its Ordos Loop. The Hedong circuit largely corresponds to the Shanxi province today, or “Shanyou 山右” region as it is known in traditional sources. Both names designate the area as “west of the mountains”, due to the Taihang Mountain Range that forms another natural boundary of the region to its east (Maps 1 & 2). Among the ten circuits established within the newly founded Tang dynasty, Hedong was situated to the east of the capital area of Chang’an and the Guannei circuit 關內道, a heartland protected by surrounding mountain ranges, and the traditional political center since the Qin Empire,<sup>181</sup> whereas to its south was the central plain surrounding the

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<sup>179</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>180</sup> The precursor to the Hedong circuit was the Hedong commandery 河東郡 first established under the unified Qin Empire. The Hedong circuit was first established by Emperor Wen of the Sui dynasty, but soon abolished, until restored by Emperor Taizu of Tang.

<sup>181</sup> For the geographic and cultural history of the Guannei region up until the Tang dynasty, see a brief review provided by Mark Edward Lewis 2009, 8-13.

culturally-precious Eastern Capital of Luoyang.

The Hedong circuit also boasted its regional center and a major metropolis, Taiyuan 太原 (a.k.a. Jinyang 晋阳), which later became the Northern Capital of the empire.

Taiyuan was the birthplace of the Tang dynasty, regarded as the “place where ancestors [of the Tang imperial family] planted their virtue (祖宗植德之所)”.<sup>182</sup> When the founding emperor Gaozu 高祖 of the Tang dynasty Li Yuan 李淵 (566-635 CE) initiated his rebellion against the Sui in Daye 12 (617 CE), he held the title of “Regent of Taiyuan 太原留守”. The Hedong region remained a strategic northern frontier with the establishment of the Tang dynasty,<sup>183</sup> entrusted to the prominent general and courtier Li Ji 李勣 (f.k.a. Xu Shiji 徐世勣, Li Shiji 李世勣).<sup>184</sup>

Wu Zetian, a consort of the second emperor Taizong, and the empress of his son Gaozong, also had a profound connection to the Taiyuan area, and as demonstrated by later discussions, her patronage may have been the decisive factor in Mount Wutai’s early development. Empress Wu had identified her family as originating from Bing prefecture. Her mother, Lady Yang 楊氏, was said to belong to the elite “Huayin Yang 華陰楊” clan,

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<sup>182</sup> Instead of reading it as the “ancestral homeland of the Tang imperial family” (Raoul Birnbaum 1986, 9), it is more precise to say, it was regarded as the place where the Li clan started to rise to power. Since the Tang imperial family claimed to be members of the prestigious “Longxi Li 隴西李” clan, with their ancestral land located in the historical Longxi Prefecture, in present-day Gansu province. For the history of the powerful Longxi Li clan prior to the Tang period, see Chen Shuang 1998, 58-61, 65-67, and 72-75. Despite the official narrative, Chen Yique believed that Tang rulers were in fact descendants of a very obscure Li family, but nonetheless promoted this image of their lineage for political reasons. See Chen Yique 2001, 183-235.

<sup>183</sup> On the importance of Taiyuan’s location, see Yen Keng-wang 1998, 1335-1336.

<sup>184</sup> Andrew Eisenberg 2012, 58-59.

reputedly related to the Sui royal line.<sup>185</sup> It was through significant linkages between her maternal relatives and the aforementioned Bing prefecture general Li Ji that Wu Zetian was enthroned as the empress as a part of Emperor Gaozong's factional struggle against the Zhangsun 長孫 clique.<sup>186</sup> It is also interesting to note that this blood relation parallels the connections in political recapitalizations of Buddhism under the reigns of Empress Wu and Buddhist rulers of the Sui dynasty.<sup>187</sup>

#### THE AVATAMSAKA SŪTRA, THE DIVINE EMPRESS AND HER “MAÑJUŚRĪ OPERATION”

During the founding of the empire, the Li imperial family promoted their lineage to Laozi 老子, whose name had been identified since the Han period as Li Er 李耳, soon elevating Daoism to the status of state religion.<sup>188</sup> Since the support of Daoists played a key

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<sup>185</sup> The imperial family of the Tang dynasty was very conscious of surnames and the social and political implications they embodied. The most evident point is their obsession with “surname books 姓氏書”. The court had employed the surveys and compilations of the genealogies of the empire's prominent clans as a means to break down the existing hierarchy and reconstruct it according to their own agenda. The strategy was employed during the consolidation period during Taizong 太宗's rule against the “Four Surnames (四姓)” to deflate their status and social pretensions. When the first draft of *Compendium of Clans and Lineages of the Zhenguan Era* 貞觀氏族志 was presented to the throne, Taizong was infuriated to see that the imperial lineage was ranked after two of the “four surnames.” Taizong rejected the work and ordered a new compilation, in which imperial family was placed in the first rank. See Twitchett 1979, 212-213. Empress Wu employed this method again to correct the omission of her own clan due to its comparatively low social standing. The previous *Compendium of Clans and Lineages of the Zhenguan Era* were collected and destroyed, replaced by the *Record of Surnames and Clans* 姓氏錄. See Twitchett 1979, 260-261. Now neither of these two compendiums is extant. They only exist in fragments, retrieved from the Dunhuang manuscripts. Yu Wanli 2010. The third official compilation was during Emperor Xianzong 憲宗's rule to update the social landscape at the mid-and late-Tang period. The *Compendium of Surnames of the Yuanhe Era* 元和姓纂 survived in full, see Cen Zhongmian 1994.

<sup>186</sup> Andrew Eisenberg 2012, 45-69.

<sup>187</sup> For instance, their reverence of Buddhist relics and their exploitation of the famous legend of Candraprabha Kumāra 月光童子, see Chen Jinhua 2002 b, 117-128, for a comparative study.

<sup>188</sup> T. H. Barrett 2006.



element in the initial legitimation of Tang rule,<sup>189</sup> abundant evidence points to the indifferent, if not hostile, attitude towards Buddhism held by the first three rulers, Emperors Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618-626 CE), Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-649 CE) and Gaozong 高宗 (r. 655-683 CE). Although they restrained from repeating large-scaled persecutions, precedence was given to Daoism over Buddhism, and restrictions were issued to limit the strength and influence of the Buddhist church and clergy.<sup>190</sup>

In Xianqing 顯慶 5 (660 CE), after suffering a stroke, Emperor Gaozong delegated his duties to his Empress Wu Zetian.<sup>191</sup> She then carefully consolidated her power until the emperor passed away in Hongdao 弘道 1 (683 CE). Empress Wu continued to extend great influence as the regent of her sons, first behind Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684 CE; reinstated 705-710 CE), who was deposed within a year of his succession, and then Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 684-690 CE; reinstated 710-712 CE), who soon ended his six years as figurehead. The ruling power officially slipped to the hands of Empress Wu, when she finally became the monarch of the Great Zhou 大周 interregnum in Tianshou 天授 1 (690 CE).

On her path to become the first and only female ruler in the history of imperial

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<sup>189</sup> For the prophecy that a Daoist messiah surnamed Li will ascend as the perfect ruler, see Woodbridge Gingham 1937, 368-374, Anna Seidel 1969, 216-247, and Howard J. Wechsler 1985, 62-69.

<sup>190</sup> Steinley Weinstein 1987, 5-27.

<sup>191</sup> Denis Twitchett believed that Emperor Gaozong's health did not start to worsen until Xianqing 5 (660 CE) (Denis Twitchett ed. 1979, 255), nevertheless, Chen Jinhua regarded this date as a result of misreading, and proposed Emperor Gaozong had already become seriously ill since Xianqing 1 (656 CE) (Chen Jinhua 2002 b, 47, note 28). In any case, Empress Wu has completely seized power by Xianqing 5 (660 CE). For a brief religious history under the regions Emperor Gaozu and Empress Wu, see Stanley Weinstein 1987, 27-47; Kamata Shigeo 1994-99, 73-78.

China, Wu Zetian was faced with daunting cultural obstacles and fierce opposition that forced her to seek for sources of legitimacy among a pantheon of female divinities and paragons.<sup>192</sup> Drawing from a vast array of traditions including Confucian, Daoist canons and other popular myths, Buddhism remained a vital role in her complex legitimizing machinations. Previous studies have revealed the family background and personal piety behind Empress Wu's relationship with Buddhism, but perhaps most of all, it was her political ambition against the deeply entrenched stigma in native culture that shaped her to external support in this "foreign religion".<sup>193</sup> Once she officially became the emperor, Wu Zetian overturned the Daoist privilege under the Li family rule by decreeing that Buddhism should be given precedence over Daoism.<sup>194</sup>

During the Empress' time, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* was widely propagated, and arguably became a central aspect of her Buddhist ideology that helped the legitimization of her rule.<sup>195</sup> The scripture is constructed on the cosmology of a "Lotus Repository World"

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<sup>192</sup> In a recent book, N. Harry Rothschild offered a rather comprehensive review of what he called the "pantheon of *devis*, divinities, and dynastic mothers" of Wu Zetian (N. Harry Rothschild 2015).

<sup>193</sup> Empress Wu's Buddhist patronage is too complex a subject that it is beyond the scope of this thesis. Some key studies include Yabuki Keiki 1927, 685-763; Chen Yinque 1977, 421-36; Rao Zongyi 1974, 397-418; Antonino Forte 1976 and 1988; R. W. L. Guisso 1978; and more recently Ku Cheng-mei 2003, 233-424 (cf. Lin Yun-jo 2004, 589-598; Xie Xiaohui 2007, 188-192; Lu Yang 1996 a, 20-36, and id. 1996 b, 2-12).

<sup>194</sup> Steinley Weinstein 1987, 43.

<sup>195</sup> The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* may have been introduced to Empress Wu in the late 650s by Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (d. 682 CE), who was a Daoist physician, but nonetheless well versed in Buddhist teachings. This episode was recorded in Fazang 法藏 (643-712 CE)'s *Biographies and Accounts Related to the Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 華嚴經傳記 (T51n2073), 171c, but no dating was provided. Chen Jinhua estimated the date to be around Xianqing 1 (656 CE), when Emperor Gao's health grew bad, and Sun Simiao summoned into the court (Chen Jinhua 2007, 242). Empress Wu's emphasis on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* is discussed in detail later. Despite her keen interest in the *sūtra* in her days as the empress, Ku Cheng-mei has pointed out that Empress Wu perhaps mainly followed Xue Huaiyi 薛懷義's schemes during Tianshou 1-Zhengsheng 1 (690-694 CE), the initial stage of her interregnum. It was until Xue's death that the Empress resumed her emphasis on the *Avataṃsaka*

that embraces all worlds where numerous Buddhas exist simultaneously in the universe, which brought forth a fundamental principle of Mahāyāna Buddhism regarding the Buddha's multiplicity and omnipresence.<sup>196</sup> Self-fashioned as a Buddhist Sage King and avatar of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,<sup>197</sup> Empress Wu must have found the scripture instrumental in normalizing the concept that the same Buddha can hold multiple identities in the past and future as Bodhisattvas or Sage Kings. The degree of gender fluidity in Buddhist reincarnation was also convenient for the oppositions she faced due to her biological sex.<sup>198</sup> Vairocana 盧舍那 (var. 毗盧舍那, 毗盧遮那, etc.),<sup>199</sup> the main deity of

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teachings (Ku Cheng-mei 2003, 223-274). Xue Zongzheng held a similar view and elaborated on Ku Cheng-mei's analyses (Xue Zongzheng 2009, 246-267).

<sup>196</sup> In contrast, in pre-Mahāyāna scriptures, the Buddha was often depicted as a historical figure, who is no longer residing in this world. While earlier Mahāyāna scriptures already started to expand the Buddha's presence, such as the idea of an eternal Buddha expressed in the *Lotus Sūtra of the Fine Dharma* 妙法蓮華經, the Buddhist worldview of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* was yet another revolutionary development (Sadakata Akira 1997, 143-157).

<sup>197</sup> Wu Zetian's emphases on different Buddhist deities were perhaps related to the constantly evolving schemes of her Buddhist propagandists, often accompanied with her reception and promotion of relevant Buddhist scriptures. In addition to Vairocana, Mañjuśrī and Queen Māyā who are the focuses of this dissertation, other notable Buddhist figures Empress Wu affiliated herself with include the Maitreya 彌勒 (a.k.a. 慈氏), the Devī Pure Light 淨光天女, the Prince Moonlight 月光天子 and Moon-like Pure Light 月淨光. For a brief summary, see N. Harry Rothschild 2015, 209-224. Xue Zongzheng argued that the year Zhengsheng 1 (694 CE) was a dividing point between Empress Wu's promotion of a Devī Pure Light and Maitreya hybrid cult, and her return to the Avatamsaka tradition with an emphasis on Vairocana cult, signified by the event of renouncing "the Maitreya" part of her title (Xue Zongzheng 2009, 246-267). Ku Cheng-mei had proposed an even more rigid periodization, parsing periods when Empress Wu used the image of a certain Buddha or Bodhisattva (Ku Cheng-mei 2003, 223-324). Nevertheless, as Chen Hua has pointed out, and I tend to agree, that by the time of Empress Wu, Buddhist emperors of Medieval China had been fashioning themselves in a variety ways, as Great Patrons 大檀越 (Skt. Mahādānapati), Wheel Turning Sage Kings (Skt. Ākravartin) 轉輪王, Heavenly Kings 天王, living Bodhisattvas 菩薩, or Buddha-incarnated Kings 佛王 (Skt. Buddharāja) (Chen Hua 1988, 53-97). Kao Wan-yu also argued that rulers did not always stick to one Buddhist deity at a time for his or her image (Kao Wan-yu 2004, 301).

<sup>198</sup> Rebecca Doran 2011, 353-354.

<sup>199</sup> As I explain in Chapter 4, Vairocana was sometimes considered interchangeable with Śākyamuni based on the widely circulated fifth-century Chinese text entitled *Brahmajāla Sūtra* 梵網經. With the rise of esoteric Buddhism in mid-Tang, an esoteric form of Vairocana, known as Mahāvairocana 大日如來, had

the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, was generously endorsed by the Empress and perhaps was indicated as one of her avatars.<sup>200</sup> With the justification of the Buddhas' all-pervasive presence and reincarnation devices, Empress Wu not only justified her reign, but also eased the anxieties towards an approaching eschatology.

Empress Wu's propagandas were primarily implemented through her Buddhist establishment. For example, the "Avataṃsaka Master 華嚴師" Fazang 法藏 (643-712 CE) was a prominent political figure who emerged through her patronage.<sup>201</sup> As Chen Jinhua has pointed out, as early as in Yongchang 永昌 1 (689 CE), Fazang was already entrusted with a grand and symbolic event—a *dharma* assembly on Avataṃsaka teachings on the

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become the premier Buddha of the esoteric pantheon, as seen presiding over the center direction in both the Womb Mandala and Diamond Mandala.

<sup>200</sup> The name "zhao 曱" adopted by Empress Wu shortly after her enthronement in Tianshou 1 (690 CE) has often been used to illustrate her self-fashioning as the Vairocana Buddha. It was believed that the two radicals used to create this new character, "ming 明" (lit. bright, or illuminate) and "kong 空" (lit. heaven), might allude to the meaning of "Buddha of Great Illumination". See, for example, Gong Dazhong 1980, 8. This opinion was also held by Kang Le (Kang Le 1996, 20) and Ku Cheng-mei (Ku Cheng-mei 2003, 239-240). However, we were also reminded of its possible associations with the Devī Pure Light 淨光天女 mentioned in the *Great Cloud Sūtra*, as well as the Prince Moonlight 月光天子 and Moon-like Pure Light 月淨光 from the *Precious Rain Sūtra Pronounced by the Buddha*.

The colossal statue of the Vairocana Buddha at the Cave of the Great Fengxiansi 大奉仙寺 at Longmen 龍門 Grotto has often been cited as an important piece of evidence for Empress Wu's Vairocana affiliation. It has been pointed out that in the early 660s CE, the construction was probably already commenced, in contrast to the conventional dating to Xianheng 咸亨 3 (672 CE) (Zhang Kaisheng 1996, 77-80). Scholars including Gong Dazhong had proposed that the famine appearance of the statue might have been modeled after Empress Wu herself (Gong Dazhong 1980, 6-18), nevertheless, this speculation has been proved quite problematic. See Guo Shaolin 2012, 45-54. For additional discussions on the Vairocana Buddha statue of Fengxiansi, see N. Harry Rothschild 2015, 224-225.

<sup>201</sup> Fazang was a monk with Sogdian origin, who was later sanctified as the third patriarch of the "Avataṃsaka Tradition 華嚴宗", following the lineage of Dushun 杜順 (557-640 CE), Zhiyan 智嚴 (602-668 CE), and succeeded by Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839 CE) and Zongmi 宗密 (807-841 CE). See Chen Jinhua 2007, for a comprehensive biography and an extensive bibliography of Fazang. For a discussion of the creation of the Avataṃsaka lineage, see Imre Hamar 2011, 181-191.

eve of Empress Wu's "usurpation" in the following year.<sup>202</sup> Corrupted or apocryphal *sūtras*, most notably the *Commentary to the Great Cloud Sūtra* 大雲經疏 completed in Tianshou 1 (690 CE) and the *Precious Rain Sūtra Pronounced by the Buddha* 佛說寶雨經 in Changshou 2 (693 CE), provided ideological bases for the Great Zhou interregnum.<sup>203</sup> Meanwhile, Wu Zetian also harnessed the ritual potencies through new translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, first as shorter extracts and then as a complete eighty-fascicle set, for her rule as a Buddhist Sage King, an incarnation of motherly Buddha or Bodhisattva.<sup>204</sup> The major undertakers for new translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* such as Śikṣhānanda 實叉難陀 and Devaprajñā 提雲般若 were natives of the central Asian kingdom of Khotan 于闐, where the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* had been promoted as state ideology since the fourth-fifth centuries CE.<sup>205</sup>

Clearly aware of the Khotanese association, Empress Wu dispatched imperial envoys to bring back a Sanskrit version of the *sūtra*.<sup>206</sup> In Zhengsheng 1 (694 CE), the Empress commissioned a new translation with herself taking on the symbolic role of the

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<sup>202</sup> Chen Jinhua 2007, 244-252.

<sup>203</sup> Antonino Forte 1976; R. W. L. Guisso 1978.

<sup>204</sup> Chinese translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* were already in circulation during Easter Jin dynasty, nevertheless, productions of new redactions continued during the Tang dynasty under imperial orders. For example, the "Chapter on the Entering of the Dharma Realm" translated by Divākara 地婆訶羅 in Chuigong 垂拱 1 (685 CE) was of special significance, in which it was explained that *śakravartins* were incarnations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and gave accounts that made clear the major deities of the *sūtra*, including Vairocana, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra were all once manifested as *śakravartins*.

<sup>205</sup> Chen Jinhua 2007, 18-19.

<sup>206</sup> Collected in the *Complete Writings of the Tang* 全唐文. Given the significant role played by Khotan in Tang international relations, Chen Jinhua believes Empress Wu's interest in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* may also have diplomatic concerns (Chen Jinhua 2007).

“scribe (筆受)” during the commencement ritual held at her inner palace chapel, the Great Biankongsi 大遍空寺.<sup>207</sup> In Shengli 聖歷 2 (699 CE), Empress Wu wrote a preface for the newly translated *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* with deep appreciation. Shortly after the translation was completed, Fazang delivered a series of lectures that concurred with great omens that pleased the empress. She expounded the miraculous effects of the *sūtra* in an edict:

The day when the translation [of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*] was commenced, an auspicious sign was displayed that [the ambrosia of] Sweet Dews appeared in my dream. When the lecture [on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*] started, the extraordinary marvel of an earthquake appeared. It must be that the One Who has Thus Come sent down these miracles in accordance with the text about the “Nine Assemblies”. How dare I, mediocre and empty, claim credit for the “Six Kinds of Response”?<sup>208</sup>

初譯之日。夢甘露以呈祥。開講之辰。感地動而表異。斯乃如來降跡。用符九會之文。豈朕庸虛。敢當六種之應。<sup>209</sup>

That abundant sources have pointed to the central status of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* in the legitimization of Empress Wu’s rule is evident, but how does Mount Wutai fit in the grand scheme of things?

Empress Wu’s specific interest in Mount Wutai was perhaps initially tied to the cult of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. According to T. H. Barrett, her patronage had reached such a grand scheme that warranted what Antonino Forte called a “Mañjuśrī Operation”. As I have explained elsewhere,<sup>210</sup> Mount Wutai was elevated during the Sui and early Tang as the sacred abode of Mañjuśrī, sanctified by the very text of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. The

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<sup>207</sup> Chen Jinhua 2007, 367-376.

<sup>208</sup> Translation modified after Chen Jinhua 2007, 144.

<sup>209</sup> *Song Biographies* (T50n2061), 0732b.

<sup>210</sup> See Appendix A.

ideological currency vested in this great Bodhisattva provided an important incentive for the Empress, since in addition to being a leading protagonist, a chief interlocutor and a prominent preacher, Mañjuśrī was considered the “mother and father of all Bodhisattvas” in some of the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras. In the *Sūtra of King Ajātaśatru* 阿闍世王經 (Skt. *Ajātaśatru Kaukṛtya Vinodana Sūtra*) translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 (abbr. 支讖) by the late second century CE, for example, the Buddha told Śāriputra:<sup>211</sup>

Mañjuśrī caused me to conceive the aspiration for awakening after giving me the alms food. Therefore, [he] was [my] respected teacher who caused [my] first aspiration to awakening. [...I see] in the innumerable worlds and incalculable Buddhas like me who have been established in awakening by Mañjuśrī. [...] Mañjuśrī is the mother of the bodhisattvas, their father, the one who shows compassion to them, and their instigator. Why did I achieve the state of Tathāgata? Mañjuśrī’s former favor is the reason and the cause. Therefore, I am charged with ingratitude.<sup>212</sup>  
文殊師利以食與我。作其功德而令發心。是則本之初發阿耨多羅三耶三菩心恩師。[...] 如我身等不可數阿僧祇刹土諸佛。悉為文殊師利之所發動。[...] 文殊師利者。是菩薩之父母。是則為迦羅蜜。屬所問者。何緣而置怛薩阿竭。而我之所得。悉蒙文殊師利恩。以為是恩故。<sup>213</sup>

Empress Wu’s patronage of the Mañjuśrī cult at Mount Wutai reminds us of the crucial concept of “mothers and motherhood” played in the construction of her political persona, in consistency with her goal of becoming the “Sage Mother and Divine Emperor 聖母神皇” and the “Saintly and Divine Emperor of the Gold Wheel 金輪神聖皇帝” of the

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<sup>211</sup> For the history of textual transmission and translation of this sūtra, see Paul M. Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann 2000, 167-169.

<sup>212</sup> Translation modified after Paul M. Harrison 2000, 170. Harrison’s translation was based on a Tibetan version that is quite similar to the Chinese translation. For convenience, I cited Lokakṣema’s version, and changed the English translation accordingly. For more on the Tibetan version, as well as discussions on fragments of text in Sanskrit, see Paul M. Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann 2000, 167-302.

<sup>213</sup> T15n0626, 0394b.

empire.<sup>214</sup>

## MONKS, MOUNTAINS, MONASTERIES AND THE QINGLIANG RECORDS

Empress Wu's patronage at Mount Wutai could be traced to an early stage in her political career, and it probably was not a coincidence that during Empress Wu's time in power we finally begin to find concrete records on Mount Wutai.<sup>215</sup> A group of regional records on Mount Wutai, sometimes referred to as the "Mount Qingliang Gazetteers" (Table 1), is a tradition that started at this very period:

**Table 1. List of Major Works in "Mountain Qingliang Gazetteers" Tradition<sup>216</sup>**

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<sup>214</sup> These two honorific titles were adopted in Chuigong 4 (688 CE) and Changshou 2 (693 CE) respectively, and belonged to a series of such titles held by Empress Wu.

<sup>215</sup> It was said that Mount Wutai enjoyed imperial patronage from the founding of Tang dynasty onward. These claims were almost a millennium later than the facts, which were made by Ming dynasty monk Zhencheng 鎮澄 (1547-1617 CE), in his *Mount Qingliang Gazetteer* 清涼山志 completed in Wanli 萬曆 24 (1596 CE) of the Ming dynasty. Nonetheless, Zhencheng's accounts have been taken by most scholars as historical fact (see, for instance, Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 33). Often-cited claims include Emperor Taizong's recognition of the importance of Mount Wutai as "the hidden dwelling place of Mañjuśrī (文殊閣宅)", and his sponsorship in the construction of ten temples and the ordination of a hundred or so monks in Zhenguan 9 (635 CE). In addition, Emperor Gaozong allegedly issued a decree to remove taxes for Mount Wutai in as early as Xianqing 1 (656 CE), before being seriously impacted by health issues and passing on his power to Empress Wu. See *Mount Qingliang Gazetteer*, 126-127. As Inoue Ichii has already persuasively demonstrated, it is unlikely that Emperor Taizong or Gaozong had already begun patronizing Buddhism at Mount Wutai (see Inoue Ichii 1928 a, 527-545, id. 1928 b, 640-653, 1929 a, 154-171 and 1929 b, 233-239, for further discussions).

<sup>216</sup> In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the *Mount Qingliang Gazetteer* existed in many different variants, most of which were based on Zhencheng's text. The table does not include abbreviated editions, such as the two-fascicle *Essential of Mount Qingliang Gazetteer* 清涼山志輯要 compiled by Yade 雅德 in Qianlong 乾隆 45 (1780 CE), or a contemporary text compiled by Wang Bendao 汪本道 with the same title. The table also left out several Qing dynasty texts in other languages, such as the five-fascicle *Gazetteer of the Sacred Qingliang Mountains* 聖地清涼山志, edited by the Third Changgja 三世章嘉, Rölpe Dorjé 若必多吉, in Tibetan, printed by the Jifu Monastery 集福寺 of Mount Wutai in Daoguang 道光 11 (1831 CE). In addition, it should be noted that previous studies on local gazetteers of Mount Wutai sometimes included texts that were compiled for other mountains under the same "wutai" name. For example, a "Record of Mount Wutai 五臺山志" was appended to a Ming dynasty *Yao Prefecture Gazetteer* 耀州志 compiled by Qiao Shining 喬世寧 as its eleventh fascicle. However, here the Mount Wutai refers to the Mount Wutai located in



Title	Vols.	Author and/or Editor	Date
<i>Brief Record of Mount Qingliang</i> 清涼山略傳	1	Huize 會曠 of the Huichangsi 會昌寺	shortly after Longshuo 龍朔 2 (662 CE), Tang dynasty
<i>Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang</i> 古清涼傳	2	Huixiang 慧祥 from Langu 藍谷	Yonglong 永隆 1 - Hongdao 弘道 1 (680-683 CE), Tang dynasty
<i>Expanded Record of Mount Qingliang</i> 廣清涼傳 <sup>217</sup>	3	Yanyi 延一 (a.k.a. Master Miaoji 妙濟大師, b. 999 CE) of the Great Avatamsaka Monastery 大華嚴寺 at Mount Wutai	Jiayou 嘉祐 5 (1060 CE), Northern Song dynasty
<i>Further Record of Mount Qingliang</i> 續清涼傳 <sup>218</sup>	2	Grand Councilor 丞相 Zhang Shangying 張商英 (a.k.a. “Layman of Infinite 無盡居士”)	Yuanyou 元祐 4 (1089 CE), Northern Song dynasty
<i>Mount Qingliang Gazetteer</i> 清涼山志 <sup>219</sup>	10	Master Zhencheng 鎮澄法師	Wanli 萬曆 24 (1596 CE), Ming dynasty
<i>New Mount Qingliang Gazetteer</i> 清涼山新志 <sup>220</sup>	10	Lozang Tenpa 老藏丹巴 (1632-1684 CE)	Kangxi 康熙 33 (1694 CE), Qing dynasty
<i>Imperial Record of Mount Qingliang</i> 欽定清涼山志	20/22	Dong Gao 董誥 and others	The twenty-fascicle text was first commissioned by the Qing dynasty Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 in the

present-day Shaanxi 陝西 province. There are at least three places named as “Mount Wutai” in Shaanxi, the other two, called “Little Mount Wutai 小五臺”, are located in Xi’an 西安 area and Mount Zhongnan to its south, respectively. See Lin Yun-jo 2014 b, 129-135, and 138-139.

<sup>217</sup> Mingchong 明崇, a former Buddhist Chief Supervisor of the Palace [Chapel] 管內僧正 from Dai prefecture, compiled the *Addendum to the Expanded Record of Mounta Qingliang* 廣清涼傳續遺, often appended to Yanyi’s original work in later reprints. It supplemented accounts in the *Expanded Record* to the end of the Tianjuan 天眷 era (1138-1140 CE) of the Jurchen Jin dynasty.

<sup>218</sup> Appended to *Further Record of Mount Qingliang* is a collection of miraculous accounts witnessed by Jin dynasty officials, entitled the “Record of Signs and Wonders of Mount Wutai 五臺瑞應記”. The record was compiled by a Northern Song dynasty scholar, Zhu Bian 朱弁 (a.k.a. Lay Buddhist Follower Guanru 觀如居士, d. 1144 CE), who was then under Jurchen Jin dynasty’s captivity (Robert M. Gimello 1992, 89-149; Robert M. Gimello 1994, 501-612).

<sup>219</sup> In his preface to the *Mount Qingliang Gazetteer*, Zhengcheng mentioned a twenty-fascicle text entitled *Qingliang Gazetteer* 清涼志, compiled by Master Qiuya 秋厓法師 during the Zhengde 正德 era (1506-1521 CE), Ming dynasty. This text is now lost and no further information about Qiuya is available elsewhere. Zhengcheng said that he had based his *Mount Qingliang Gazetteer* on Qiuya’s more extensive but somewhat redundant work.

<sup>220</sup> The *New Mount Qingliang Gazetteer* 清涼山新志 is a revision based on a *Mount Qingliang Gazetteer* 清涼山志 written by Ngawang Lozang 阿王老藏 (a.k.a. Ngawang Lobsang 阿旺羅桑, 1601-1687 CE). See B. Tomerbagan 2008. The text was also translated and printed in Tibetan, Mongolian and Manchurian languages.

			fiftieth year of his region (1787 CE); The second edition with 2 additional fascicles was printed in the Qiaqing嘉慶 16 (1811 CE)
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Although the *Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang* 古清涼傳 written by monk Huixiang 慧祥 (var. 惠祥)<sup>221</sup> was the earliest extant document,<sup>222</sup> it mentioned the yet earlier, and probably the first text of this genre, namely the *Brief Record of Mount Qingliang* 清涼山略傳 (a.k.a. *Brief Record* 略傳)<sup>223</sup> written by another monk Huize 會曠, completed shortly after the Longshuo 龍朔 era (661-663 CE):

In the Longshuo era of the Tang, monk Huize of the Huichang Monastery at the Western Capital [Chang'an] and the Eunuch Fan-bearer and Palace Attendant Zhang Xinghong, together with other, were frequently sent to Mount Qingliang by imperial decree, to investigate its holy traces. [...] [Hui]ze then made a small painting of this mountain, and compiled a one-fascicle *Brief Record*, to be widely circulated in the capital city and its three environ areas.<sup>224</sup>

唐龍朔年中。頻敕西京會昌寺沙門會曠共內侍掌扇張行弘等。往清涼山檢行聖跡。[...] 曠又以此山圖為小帳。述略傳一卷。廣行三輔云。<sup>225</sup>

Acting under the imperial decree, there was no doubt that Huize's visits to Mount Wutai was known and sponsored by the Tang court. Huize's actives were verified by two other contemporary texts that appeared to have independent sources, the *Account of Stimuli and Responses* compiled by Daoxuan,<sup>226</sup> and the *Biographies and Accounts Related to the*

<sup>221</sup> For studies on Huixiang, see Ogasawara Senshū 1936, 35-44; Ibuki Atsushi 1987, 33-45; Delü 2014, 1-18.

<sup>222</sup> The text was dated to around Yonglong 永隆 1 - Hongdao 弘道 1 (680-683 CE), see Delü 2012, 1.

<sup>223</sup> Huixiang referred to the text simply as the "*Brief Record* 略傳". The full title, the "*Brief Record of Mount Qingliang*", is based on Ennin's records.

<sup>224</sup> See also Susan Andrews 2013, 101-102 for an alternative transition.

<sup>225</sup> T51n2098, 1098b-1098c.

<sup>226</sup> T52n2106.

*Avatamsaka Sūtra* by Fazang.<sup>227</sup> The former text detailed two trips in Longshuo 1 (661 CE) and Longshuo 2 (662 CE):

In Longshuo 1 of the Tang, an imperial decree was issued dispatching Huize of the Huichangsi to Mount Wutai, to repair monasteries and pagodas.

唐龍朔元年。下勅令會昌寺僧會蹟往五臺山修理寺塔。

In Longshuo 2, under [the reign of] the present Majesty, Huize was dispatched [to Mount Wutai] again, together with the assistance of officials and goods, to repair the old monasteries and pagodas [located there].

今上龍朔二年。又令蹟往並吏力財帛往修理故寺。<sup>228</sup>

Additionally, although the official ruler at that time was still Emperor Gaozong, Huixiang's account made it clear that Huize was acting on behalf of the wishes of the “divine empress (聖后)”:

Since [Hui]ze and fellow visitors were acting under the command of the empire, after witnessing auspicious omens, they fully reported them to the throne, and fulfilled the majesty's wishes very well. As a result, the holy traces of Qingliang became increasingly spread over the entire capital area. The treasurable manifestations of Mañjuśrī were laid clearly before the public. It was the vigor of the owner of the empire that made the gradually drowning victims come to grip with the profoundness of marvelous things, and the misfits who lost their way find mysterious beauty in the great and the righteous. Such a magnificent and extraordinary symphony cannot be achieved without having resounding voices with the divine, and such profound thoughts about the doctrine undoubtedly display the numinous trajectories of deep learnings. The will of the Divine Empress will be clear even after a thousand years have passed.

蹟等既承國命。目睹佳祥。具已奏聞。深稱聖旨。於是清涼聖跡。益聽京畿，

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<sup>227</sup> T51n2073. The text was completed in ca. Tianshou 天授 1 (690 CE), had later revisions from Chang'an 長安 4-Yanhe 延和 1 (704-712 CE), see Antonino Forte 2000, 57-58; Chen Jinhua 2007, 19-20.

<sup>228</sup> T52n2106, 0422c-0423a. Huize's visits to Mount Wutai during the Longshuo era was also mentioned in T52n2106, 0425a: “Since the Longshuo era, the court has repeatedly sent monk Huize of Huichangsi there (i.e. Mount Wutai) to restore its monasteries and pagodas, who also ran into holy traces. 龍朔已來。下敕令會昌寺僧會蹟往彼修理寺塔。前後再返。亦遇靈感。”

文殊寶化。昭揚道路。使悠悠溺喪。識妙物之冥泓。蠢蠢迷津。悟大方之幽致者。國君之力也。非夫道契玄極。影響神交。何能降未常之巨唱。顯難思之勝軌。千載之後。知聖后之所志焉。<sup>229</sup>

Huize's visit to Mount Wutai in the Longshuo era (661-663 CE) was one of the earliest Buddhist activities patronized by Empress Wu after she gained power. It patently belonged to a broader category of politico-religious propaganda and imperial legitimization showmanship. It was only shortly after she became familiar with Avataṃsaka teachings, and closely followed the year Xianqing 顯慶 5 (660 CE), when the Buddhist reliquary at the Famen Temple 法門寺 was permitted for re-opening, and subsequently moved to the imperial palace in the Eastern Capital Luoyang for veneration.<sup>230</sup>

Huixiang did not slightly shun away from praising the publicist agenda in promoting the cult of Mount Wutai and its residing Buddhist deity Mañjuśrī, and portrayed the Empress as directing a path of salvation for her suffering people. The sanctification program was in accordance with her broader concerns about creating a Buddhist center in China beyond her religious piety and her mandate as a Buddhist ruler. As Huixiang exclaimed at Mount Wutai:

Although [I] have not been able to see the nine-leveled wonders of the King of Mountains, or the beauty of the Vulture Peak and the Cock's Foot Mountain, how immensely fortunate [am I], to be able to humbly bow [to the Wutai Mountains] and feel it by hand! For that reason, it was not just an only once in a thousand years encounter—It must be as rare as once in ten million aeons!

未覩王山九層之妙。驚峯雞足之美。內撫微躬。亦何幸之多也。豈徒千載之一

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<sup>229</sup> *Ancient Record* (T51n2098), 1098b-1098c.

<sup>230</sup> For a full account of the veneration of Famen Monastery relic, see Chen Jinhua 2002, 43-48. For Buddhist relics in general, see T. H. Barrett 2001, 1-64.

遇。故乃萬劫之稀逢耳。<sup>231</sup>

In the passage, the King of Mountains 王山 refers to the Great Meru Mountain 須彌山 (Skt. Sumeru), Vulture Peak 鷲峯 (Skt. Griddhikūṭa), near the City of the Royal House 王舍城 (Skt. Rājagṛha). Together with Cock's Foot Mountain 雞足山 (Skt. Kukkuṭapādagiri), those are Buddhist holy spots in India. By comparing the potency of Mount Wutai with that of the sacred sites of India, it shows an effort in de-centering the conventional Buddhist world and arguing for China's equal footing with India.

Indeed, with the sudden death of the great King and devoted Buddhist patron Harṣa Śīlāditya 戒日王 (r. 606-647 CE), the decline of conditions in northern India may have also contributed to the swelling confidence of Tang Buddhists.<sup>232</sup> As the advocated new center of the Buddhist world, Mount Wutai also became a significant place where many of the Tang Empire's publicity legends were staged, with foreign monks as its featured performers. Huixiang was involved in the first ever-recorded imperial fanfare starring a foreign patron. In Qianfeng 乾封 2 (667 CE), along with other imperially dispatched officials, Huixiang escorted a Sri Lanka monk named Śākyamitra 釋迦蜜多羅 on his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai:

The foreign monk Śākyamitra of the Western Regions was a native of the Lion Kingdom (i.e., Sri Lanka), who leaved his family [to become a monk] at an early age. [He] originally resided in the Mahābodhi Monastery in the Magādha Kingdom. Travelling through the vast world was perhaps an innate fascination [of his]. He arrived to pay reverence to this [Chinese] soil in the Linde era, saying that [his] destination was [Mount] Qingliang. [...] After a short wait, a memorial was presented

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<sup>231</sup> T51n2098, 1096b-1096c.

<sup>232</sup> Tansen Sen 2003, 79.

and [the emperor] was informed, who granted special permission [for his trip]. [The court] funded his travels, and through an imperial edict, [they] sent an Office of State Visitors from the Court of State Ceremonial as translator. The monk Zhicai from Liangzhou was sent to deliver the bestowed provisions to [Śākyami]tra. It was in the sixth month of Qianfeng 2 when [they] ascended to the [Five] Terrace [Mountain]. Among those who accompanied him, there was an official from the Wutai county, forty helpers, and fifty some monks and laypersons.<sup>233</sup>

西域梵僧釋迦蜜多羅者。本師子國人。少出家。本住摩伽陀國大菩提寺。遊方利物。蓋自天真。麟德年中。來儀此土。云向清涼。[...]至止未久。奉表以聞。特蒙恩許。仍資行調。勅遣鴻臚寺掌客為譯語人。涼州沙門智才。乘驛往送所在。供給多羅。以乾封二年六月。登於臺者。并將五臺縣官一員。手力四十人。及餘道俗總五十餘人。<sup>234</sup>

Empress Wu's enticement with Buddhist relics was showcased at Mount Wutai as well.<sup>235</sup>

Huixiang's record indicates that he traveled to Mount Wutai again in Zongzhang 總章 2 (669 CE), when he toured the mountain and placed *śarīra* in the iron *stūpas* on the Central and Northern Terraces.<sup>236</sup>

Buddhapālita 佛陀波利 (d. 727 CE)'s visit marked the climax of a series of similar events. He allegedly ran into an old man (considered to be a manifestation of Mañjuśrī) during his first trip, upon whose request he returned to India, and came back again with the *Sūtra of the Buddha's Supreme Uṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經.<sup>237</sup> After translating

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<sup>233</sup> Tansen Sen included Śākyamitra biography in Tansen Sen 2003, 79, but his recounts were not very accurate, probably resulted from misreading Huixiang's records.

<sup>234</sup> *Ancient Record* (T51n2098), 1098b-1098c.

<sup>235</sup> Buddhist relics continued to play an important role through Empress Wu's time in power, see Chen Jinhua 2002, 48-103.

<sup>236</sup> T51n2098, 1099b. This account is be verified by the Japanese monk Ennin 圓仁 (794-864 CE)'s travelogue, in which he noticed the ruins of "Zetian's Iron *Stūpas* (則天鐵塔)" during his pilgrimages to Mount Wutai about two centuries later. Delü and Ku Cheng-mei also noticed this account. Ku Cheng-mei, however, went further and related their "over-turned bell 覆鐘" shapes to the "over-turned bowl shaped *stūpas* 覆盆浮圖" used to hold relics of Buddhist Sage Kings (Delü 2012, 6-7; Ku Cheng-mei 2003, 399-401).

<sup>237</sup> According to the *Record of Śākyamuni's Teachings Compiled in Kaiyuan Era* 開元釋教錄 (T55n2154,

the sūtra into Chinese around Yongchun 永淳 2 (683 CE), he made a second trip to Mount Wutai, and was said to have disappeared into the Diamond Cave 金剛窟 there.<sup>238</sup> Such stories about foreign pilgrims clearly show that Empress Wu's sanctification of Mount Wutai could be seen as a confluence of her ambitions for a universal reign. Based on the poem "The Sacred Tower 靈臺" in the *Book of Poetry* 詩經,<sup>239</sup> the Empress had frequently evoked the expression "the people have come as sons (庶人子來)" in her other projects,<sup>240</sup> which served to strengthen her image as a Sage Mother, a Divine Emperor and an ideal Buddhist sovereign. It resonated with Empress Wu's promotion of Mount Wutai and its cult deity Mañjuśrī, the Great Sage and a motherly Bodhisattva.

#### THE PATRIARCH AND HIS "FOGUANG" VISUALIZATION PRACTICE

What was the situation like for Foguangsi with the rapid rise of Mount Wutai under Empress Wu? It turns out that in addition to the Longshuo era activities, Empress Wu's imperial delegate Huize paid a third visit to Mount Wutai in Linde 1 (664 CE), this time

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0708b), Within thirty-two years after Buddhapālita brought the Sanskrit text to Luoyang, five translations were produced, but the most prominent one remains to be Buddhapālita and his assistance Shunzhen 順貞's version (T19n0967, preface on 0349b-0349c). Antonino Forte has an essay on this preface, listed as forthcoming in 2006, but the author has not been able to access this manuscript, see Antonino Forte (a). Biographies based on the preface were also found in the *Further Record* (T51n2099), 1111a-1111b, for an English translation of this passage found in this text, see Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 111-112 and the *Continued Biographies* (T50n2061), 0717c-0718b. The growing popularity of this *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* caused a surge in the erection of sūtra-pillars, especially in the Wutai area. For further discussions on the sūtra pillars, see Paul W. Kroll 2001, 39-75; Kuo Liying 2006, 37-51; id. 2014, 351-385; and Liu Shu-fen 2008 (a).

<sup>238</sup> For the legend and implications of Mount Wutai's sacred caves, see Raoul Birnbaum 1989, 115-140.

<sup>239</sup> *Book of Poetry* (S16), "The Sacred Tower".

<sup>240</sup> For instance, the Luminous Hall and the "Axis of Sky 天樞". See Antonino Forte 1988, 102-108, and 238-239.

visiting Master Jietuo 解脫.<sup>241</sup> Jietuo is the first prominent figure associated with Foguangsi and known to us with substantiated records. A native of Wutai, Jietuo took up the monastic way of life at an early age.<sup>242</sup> He then traveled south in search of Buddhist masters and teachings like many of his contemporaries.<sup>243</sup> Displaying a natural talent in Buddhist learning, Jietuo was said to have stood out among other disciples. Later he returned to his hometown, probably first staying at the Zhaoguosi 昭果寺 (var. 照果寺) in Wutai county,<sup>244</sup> and subsequently relocating to Mount Wutai. Details differ in these early sources. However, they all point to late- Sui or early- Tang dynasty as the time of Jietuo's arrival.

Three biographies of him are found in Tang dynasty sources, the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* 續高僧傳, the *Ancient Record* and the *Avatamsaka Biographies*.<sup>245</sup> According to the latest but most extensive account in the *Avatamsaka Biographies*, Huize travelled to Mount Wutai in Linde 1 (664 CE) and honored Jietuo's relics and his decedents.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Master Jietuo's name literally means emancipation, liberation or release (Skt. *mokṣa*, *mukti*, etc.).

<sup>242</sup> Both *Continued Biographies* and *Avatamsaka Biographies* recorded Jietuo's age as seven when he "left home" for Buddhist teachings (T50n2060, 0603b; T51n2073, 0169a).

<sup>243</sup> The *Ancient Record* and *Avatamsaka Biographies* identified Jietuo's teacher as Master Zhizhao 志昭 (var. Zhichao 志超) (T51n2098, 1095c; T51n2073, 0169a), who was then located in the Mount Baofu 抱腹山 (var. 抱腹巖), near current day Jiexiu 介休, Shanxi province. Based on other contemporary records, it was a flourishing Buddhist site during the Sui and Tang period.

<sup>244</sup> Jietuo's Zhaoguosi affiliation was not mentioned in the *Avatamsaka Biographies* (T51n2073, 0169a-0169c).

<sup>245</sup> Huixiang's account was later mentioned in the Song dynasty *Expanded Record*, where a brief entry about Jietuo is given. See T51n2099, 1107b.

<sup>246</sup> The *Expanded Record* had an entry about Emperor Gaozong sending imperial commissioners to Mount Wutai in the year, which probably corresponded with this event.



Before [Jie]tuo passed away, [he] used to tell [his] relatives that “After I die, there will be an esteemed person who will spread my fame. Then the name of Clear and Cold will be revitalized!” And when the time of the present Majesty came, in the ninth month of Linde 1 (664 CE), imperial decree ordered the monk Huize of Huichangsi and Zhen Wanfu [Commandant] of the Courageous [Garrison] to deliver gifts of *kāṣāya*, and bestow [Jietuo’s] successor(s) benefits in the name of their ancestor. They also made offerings to the sacred traces on all mountain terraces. Since then, gentlemen from far and near who want to take refuge [in the Buddha] all longed for this place for eternity. [Jie]tuo’s prophecy was at last attested.

脫未終。嘗謂親裡曰。我沒後當有大人顯我名也。清涼之號於茲復興。及今上麟德元年九月。敕會昌寺沙門會顒果毅甄萬福。送衲袈裟。奉其遺陰。並向諸臺。供養聖跡。自遐邇歸心之士。莫不永懷斯地。遠驗脫言信矣。<sup>247</sup>

Written by Wu Zetian’s court priest Fazang in circa Tianshou 天授 1 (690 CE), the “present Majesty (今上)” in the passage above undoubtedly refers to the female ruler. It is thus clear that when Mount Wutai first attracted attention from the court, Jietuo was established as one of its most important figures, and Empress Wu herself was involved in the sanctification of Jietuo and the elevating Foguangsi.

In addition to the ties with Jietuo, it is quite interesting that Huize also had personal connections with Jietuo’s major disciple Mingyao 明曜. According to Huixiang, Huize first met Mingyao in Daye 2 (606 CE) of Sui dynasty, exactly when Mount Wutai received official recognition from the imperial court.<sup>248</sup> Huize was excited to see Mingyao again during his imperial missions in the Longshuo era (661-663 CE). Mingyao appeared to the chief advocate for his late teacher, Master Jietuo. According to Daoxuan, Mingyao was the source of the many myths and legends surrounding Jietuo.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> T51n2073, 0169c.

<sup>248</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>249</sup> Since no evidence show that Daoxuan had ever travelled to Mount Wutai himself, it is likely that he

There was a monk with esteemed deeds, [Ming]yao, who was one hundred and six years old, said himself that: “When I was fifty years old, [I] travelled with the Supreme Man Jietuo to the Greatly Esteemed Vulture Peak Monastery located 30 *li* southeast of the Central Terrace, hoping to meet with and pay reverence to Mañjuśrī. [When we arrived at] the north of the Flower Orchard, [we] came across a man with great virtue, who had a mystical appearance and all-encompassing kindness, making his way towards the east. Jietuo [performed prostration by touching his] forehead to the ground. I instantly felt thrilled and exultant. Soon afterwards, [I] inquired of him [to confirm that we had seen Mañjuśrī in disguise]. Jietuo said, [he] had already saw Mañjuśrī three times with his own eyes.

有高行沙門曜者。年百六歲。自雲。我年五十時。與解脫上人至中臺東南下三十裡大孚靈鷲寺請見文殊。行至花園北。遇一大德。形神慈遠。徐行東去。解脫頂禮發願。我時精神欣喜。不暇諮請。解脫雲已曾三度親見文殊。<sup>250</sup>

Huixiang's *Ancient Record* also devoted much ink to Jietuo, where miraculous aspects of Jietuo's life were greatly celebrated. He was known for repeatedly witnessing the manifestation of Buddhist deities, and for a conversation he had with Mañjuśrī in person. According to a legend Huixiang appended to Jietuo's biographic information, the Great Sage was said to have personally descended to examine him:

Every morning Jietuo made gruel for the assembly. The Great Sage suddenly appeared before him, Jietuo strangely did not turn his head to look. The Great Sage admonished him, “I am Mañjuśrī.” Jietuo replied, “Mañjuśrī is Mañjuśrī, Jietuo is Jietuo.” The Great Sage judged him truly enlightened, and withdrew and did not again appear.

脫每清旦。為眾營粥。大聖忽現於前，脫殊不顧視。大聖警曰。吾是文殊。吾是文殊。脫應聲曰。文殊自文殊，解脫自解脫。大聖審其真悟。還隱不現。<sup>251</sup>

Jietuo stayed in the Foguangsi as a recluse for nearly half a century, attracting numerous

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obtained the information from Huixiang, who mentioned correspondence with Daoxuan in his *Ancient Record*.

<sup>250</sup> *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T50n2060), 0603b.

<sup>251</sup> T51n2098, 1096a.

followers, until attaining *nirvāṇa* in the mid-seventh century, around the time when Emperor Gaozong first ascended to the throne.<sup>252</sup>

In view of Empress Wu's posthumous recognition of Master Jietuo, it is not surprising that Foguangsi attracted imperial attention and gained the spotlight on the stage of Mount Wutai. Whereas Master Jietuo had been known for his fundamental role in the Foguangsi's rise to prominence, his involvement with the monastery was probably even more profound than has been previously recognized, which only became apparent when enough attention was paid to his major discrepancy in the three early biographies. The earliest record offered by Daoxuan in his *Continued Biographies* is very vague about Jietuo's arrival at Mount Wutai. Huixiang, on the other hand, took Jietuo as merely restoring the ancient monastery. He stated in the *Ancient Record* that:

Formerly, when the Sui dynasty was just established, Buddhism again prospered [after the persecution of the Northern Zhou] and all the monasteries were repaired. At that time, Master Jietuo of the Zhaoguosi in Wutai County intended to spend his last days there [at the Foguangsi]. He subsequently made further repairs to the temple. 昔有大隋開運。正教重興。凡是伽藍。並任復修。時五臺縣昭果寺解脫禪師。於此有終焉之志。遂再加修理。<sup>253</sup>

Contrary to Huixiang's account, Fazang, who offered the most extensive biography of

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<sup>252</sup> Both the *Ancient Record* and *Avatamsaka Biographies* had "fifty years" (T51n2098, 1096a; T51n2073, 0169a), and the *Continued Biographies* had "more than forty years" (T50n2060, 0603c). In terms of Jietuo's death, the *Continued Biographies* dated it to the 永徽 era (650-655CE), whereas *Avatamsaka Biographies* gave a specific date, saying that "[he] aged eighty-one at that time [of the *nirvāṇa*], and it was Zhenguan 貞觀 16 (642 CE)" (T51n2073, 0169a).

<sup>253</sup> T51n2098, 1095c. The *Expanded Record* repeated the account but offered a different date. Instead of repairing the Foguangsi during the Sui dynasty, Yanyi changed the date to the Zhenguan 7 (633 CE) of the Tang. See T51n2099, 1107b.

Jietuo, wrote in the *Avataṃsaka Biographies* that:

At the foot of the Foguang Mountain, southwest of Mount Wutai, [Jietuo] established the Foguang *vihāra*. Based on his comprehensive learning, [Jie]tuo often chanted the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* [Sūtra], and repeatedly read the *Avataṃsaka* [Sūtra] as well, which [continued into] late nights and early mornings without stop. [He] later adopted the *Avataṃsaka* [teachings], and practiced the “*foguang guan*”.

於五臺西南之足佛光山。立佛光精舍。依之綜習。脫常誦法華。又每讀華嚴。曉夜無輟。後依華嚴。作佛光觀。<sup>254</sup>

Note that Fazang considered Jietuo as the founder of the Buddhist institution, which then still was merely a *vihāra* (精舍), yet to receive official recognition from the state and a government issued “name plaque (寺額)” to become an officially recognized monastery (寺). Did Jietuo merely “further repair (再加修理)” the monastic buildings, or did he in fact “found (立)” the Foguangsi? The latter possibility would certainly invalidate Huixiang’s effort to attribute an ancient origin to Foguangsi, however, it is the more reasonable interpretation.

As explained in the introduction, similar with the myths surrounding Mount Wutai, the established narrative had long been attributing the funding of Foguangsi to the Northern Dynasties. Huixiang categorized the monastery under the merits of Emperor Xiaowen 孝文帝 (467-499 CE, r. 471-499 CE) of the Northern Wei,<sup>255</sup> while Yanyi named a certain Prince Dangchang 宕昌王, leader of the subordinate Dangchang State under the Northern Wei empire.<sup>256</sup> These two contradicting theories were already in place no later

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<sup>254</sup> T51n2073, 0169a.

<sup>255</sup> *Ancient Record* (T51n2098, 1095c).

<sup>256</sup> *Expanded Record* (T51n2099, 1107b). According to the *Book of Wei*, the Princedom of Dangchang 宕昌國 became a tributary state to the Northern Wei during Emperor Taiwu 太武’s reign (r. 423-452 CE), and the

than the compilation of the *Expanded Record* in Jiayou 嘉祐 5 (1060 CE).<sup>257</sup> Previous scholars have either simply followed the earlier source, or suggested alternative approaches for explaining the discrepancy.<sup>258</sup> When examined closely, however, neither of the accounts was credible. It is sometimes difficult to parse between histories and myths, but this kind of ambiguity and uncertainty was by no means unique to the Foguangsi. Daoxuan was already posing questions in Linde 1 (664 CE) concerning the establishment of the Greatly Esteemed Vulture Peak Monastery 大孚靈鷲寺 at Mount Wutai. He asked, “No one has investigated it. Some say that it was established by Emperor Ming 明帝 (28-75 CE, r. 57-75 CE) of the [Eastern] Han dynasty, while others say that Emperor Xiaowen of the [Northern] Wei built it. Why do these alternate statements differ?”<sup>259</sup> Other Buddhist establishments at Mount Wutai that bore fictional links with the Northern Dynasties imperial clan include the Monastery of the [Self-immolated] Prince 王子[燒身]寺 and the Monastery of the Princess 公主寺.<sup>260</sup> Together with other myths about

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rulers of the state was bestowed the title of “Prince Dangchang”.

<sup>257</sup> Yanyi mentioned Prince Dangchang as patrons of two monasteries, the Foguangsi and the Dangchangsi. In the first entry, he recorded the Prince Dangchang as from the State of Yan 燕, which may have been a textual corruption. As for the second entry, Yanyi himself casted doubt on the attribution, and speculated the title “Dangchang 宕昌” might have been a mistaken from “Tangchang 唐昌 (lit. Prosperity of the Tang)”. Yen Keng-wang pointed out that “Dangchang Monastery” was already recorded in Daoxuan’s early Tang text *Continued Biographies* (T50n2060, 0665a), and should be its original name. See Yen Keng-wang 2007, 254.

<sup>258</sup> Yen Keng-wang suggested that the Princedom of Dangchang made regular tributes to Northern Wei, and during the reign of Emperor Xiaowen, the Prince Dangchang Liang Micheng 梁彌承 himself traveled to pay tribute in Taihe 太和 16 (492 CE). Yen argued that Liang Micheng might have traveled to Mount Wutai during his visit, and established the Foguangsi with permission from Emperor Xiaowen. As a result, the latter was also known as its commissioner (Yen Keng-wang 2007, 254-255).

<sup>259</sup> *Record of the Miraculous Instructions* (T52n2107), 0437a. Translation modified after Raoul Birnbaum 1986, 125.

<sup>260</sup> According to the *Ancient Records* (T51n2098), 1094c, the Monastery of the Self-immolated Prince was

emperor-founders of the Wutai monasteries, it reminds us that after all, in constructing the sacredness of a place, “one common feature is that the site is imbued with a suitable antiquity through stories about ancient deities or cultural heroes”.<sup>261</sup>

Was Jietuo the actual founder of Foguangsi? An important clue lies in the naming of the monastery. The founding myths attributed the naming of the Foguangsi to the imperial patrons who traveled to this area and saw the miraculous radiance of the Buddha, prolifically shining over the mountains and forests,<sup>262</sup> which seems to be taken from Jietuo’s accounts:

The mountain resembles the radiance of the Buddha, and colorful rays of light are extremely profuse, which greatly thrives in summer, dazzling people’s eyes and mouths.

山如佛光。華彩甚盛。至夏大發。昱人眼口。<sup>263</sup>

Transplanting the story of Jietuo to an imperial figure is probably a conscious act of fabrication in order to claim a more prominent lineage and gain patronage from the court.

It should also be noted that the significance of “*foguang* (佛光)” runs deeper than being a descriptive term of the miraculous radiances that gave name to the site. Available evidence also points to its additional association with “*foguang guan* (佛光觀)”, or “Visualization of Buddha’s Radiance”, which was the essential teaching of its real founder

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established in memory of a certain “third prince” of the Northern Qi dynasty. I included a parallel passage from the contemporary text *Sympathetic Response to the Great Corrective and Expansive Sūtra of the Buddha’s Avatamsaka* in my later discussions.

<sup>261</sup> James Robson 1990, 102.

<sup>262</sup> *Expanded Record* (T51n2099), 1107b.

<sup>263</sup> *Continued Biographies* (T50n2060), 0603b.

Jietuo.<sup>264</sup> Jietuo's method of visualization practice must have been quite well-known, since both Huixiang and Fazang highlighted Jietuo's practice of this meditation technique and recorded that his disciple Mingyao studied the visualization of the Buddha's Radiance with him. Although Jietuo almost definitely studied other Buddhist scriptures, the fact that this visualization practice was essentially based on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* earned him a significant place as an Avataṃsaka scholar. The rise of Mount Wutai, as I have suggested, was a result of the active promotion that occurred during Empress Wu's time in power. Her interest and patronage in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, therefore, was also an important factor in the flourishing of Avataṃsaka teaching on the mountain site, and must have contributed to the emphasis of Jietuo's contributions therein.

The prestige of Jietuo as an Avataṃsaka scholar, in turn, strengthened the merits of Mount Wutai as an advanced center of Avataṃsaka teaching, which must be seen as a legacy of Empress Wu in the broader context. It even led to Kojima Taizan's proposal of a "Mount Wutai tradition of Avataṃsaka Buddhism", on par with the other prominent tradition developed around Mount Zhongnan located on the outskirts of the capital city Chang'an.<sup>265</sup> It seems that the eminent figures associated with the Wutai center were

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<sup>264</sup> It was not clear whether Jietuo ever articulated his teaching and practice in texts. In any case, no extant writings were attributed to Jietuo, and it appears that he is only referenced by his miraculous experiences. One can probably get a glimpse into the "Visualization of Buddha's Radiance" through the "Visualization of the Gem-like Radiance" developed by his follower Li Tongxuan.

<sup>265</sup> Kojima has written a series of articles on this theory. See Kojima Taizan 1990, 83-87, for example. Note that Kojima distinguished the Mount Wutai and Mount Zhongnan traditions on ideological basis, with the former emphasizing emptiness thought and the latter Tathāgatagarbha thought. He also established a lineage of the Mount Wutai tradition of Avataṃsaka Buddhism, originating from Lingbian 靈辯, succeeded by Jietuo, Mingyao, and Li Tongxuan. Both propositions were refuted by Koh Seunghak. Nevertheless, he

heavily influenced by the visualization practice of Jietuo. For example, the lay scholar and Avataṃsaka exegete Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635-730 CE) even proposed his contemplation method along a similar tradition,<sup>266</sup> known as the “Visualization of the Gem-like Radiance (寶色光明觀)”.<sup>267</sup> A royal decedent and native of Taiyuan, Li was well known in the region, celebrated as a sage, a miracle worker and a pious practitioner by his contemporaries.<sup>268</sup>

Li Tongxuan’s fame peaked during the Song dynasty, when this lineage of visualization practice spread to Korea and Japan where it continues to attract followers to this day, notably Kōben 高辨 (a.k.a., Myōe the Superior One 明惠上人, var. 明慧上人, 1173-1232 CE), who actively promoted “traditional” Buddhist values over the new Kamakura Buddhism.<sup>269</sup> Kōben endorsed the practice of “Samādhi of Buddha’s Radiance (佛光三昧)”, and sought to combine it with the “Mantra of Light (光明真言)” of the

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supported the possibility that Mount Wutai was an important center for Avataṃsaka teaching at that time. See Koh Seunghak 2011, 275-280. In my view, instead of ideological tensions, the differences between Mount Wutai and Mount Zhongnan was more geographically based. In addition, the important figures emerged around the Mount Wutai did not form a “lineage” in the strict sense of teacher and disciple relations, however, they all self-identified with the region. See previous note 201 on the Avataṃsaka lineage.

<sup>266</sup> For an extensive study of Li Tongxuan, see Koh Seunghak 2011. Koh Seunghak questioned his association with Jietuo, since he never openly acknowledged so in his writings (ibid., 279).

<sup>267</sup> The theory was based on the “Chapter of Awakening by Light 光明覺品” of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, which depicted the light that emanated from beneath the Buddha’s feet and was to progressively illuminate the entire universe (T10n0279, 0062b-0066a; for an English translation see Thomas Cleary 1993, 282-297). See also Koh Seunghak 2011, 263-270.

<sup>268</sup> Koh Seunghak 2011. Although Li Tongxuan was sometimes dismissed as marginal and idiosyncratic by “orthodox” Avataṃsaka scholars, he flourished during the reigns of Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu and lived until the reign of Emperor Xuanzong.

<sup>269</sup> For a short English biography of Kōben, see Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr. 2013, 558. Robert M. Gimello 1983, 350-366, discussed Kōben’s reception of the Buddhist teaching of Li Tongxuan. Extensive materials on Kōben was compiled and published as Kōzanji Tenseki Monjo Sōgō Chōsadan hen 1971.



Shingon School 真言宗. He was therefore celebrated in Japan as the founder of the esoterized Avataṃsaka sect “Kegon 嚴密”.<sup>270</sup> In the *Avataṃsaka Storehouse of the Secret Treasure of the Samadhi of Buddha’s Radiance* 華嚴佛光三昧觀秘寶藏, Kōben traced the origin of his technique to Jietuo and Li Tongxuan:

[It was] thus asked: Besides the discourser [Li] Tongxuan, was this *samādhi* visualization spoken by a patriarch?

[It was] thus answered: The Master Xiangxiang (i.e., Fazang) said in part four of the *Avataṃsaka Biographies*, “Master Jietuo resided at the foot of the Foguang Mountain, southwest of the Mount Wutai. [He] established the Foguang *vihāra* [...] and practiced the Visualization of Buddha’s Radiance according to the teachings of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. [...] Also, there was monk Mingyao who treated Master Jietuo as his teacher, studying the Visualization of Buddha’s Radiance with Master Jietuo.”<sup>271</sup>

問曰。此三昧觀。通玄論主外。又有祖師所說乎。

答。香象大師華嚴傳第四云。解脫禪師居五臺西南之足佛光山。立佛光精舍。 [...] 後依華嚴作佛光觀。 [...] 又釋明曜師事解脫禪師。依脫禪師習佛光觀。

Interestingly, in addition to his main monastic quarter of Kōzanji 高山寺 established at Mount Toganō 栴尾山, Kōben built another compound and named it the “Mountain Monastery of Buddha’s Radiance 佛光山寺”.<sup>272</sup> The text cited above was written in the Cloister of the Meditation Hall 禪堂院 of that very place. Kōben certainly had named his monastery after his religious sect. Seen in this light, could the name of Foguangsi be designated to correspond with the practice of the “Visualization of Buddha’s Radiance” as

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<sup>270</sup> Kitami Murata 2008, 8-9.

<sup>271</sup> T72n2332, 0093b-0093c. The manuscript was now in collection of the Kōzanji.

<sup>272</sup> Located in Kamo 賀茂, current day Kamigamo 上賀茂, in north Kyōto 京都. It was no longer extant, and only some ruins of pagodas remain, including the ancient site of the Mountain Pagoda of Buddha’s Radiance 佛光山塔 (Higashi Noboru 2013, 4).

well?

A pagoda standing next to the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi, known as the Patriarch Pagoda 祖師塔, provides insight into the founding of the monastery.<sup>273</sup> (Figure 4) Liang Ssu-ch'eng had tentatively suggested that its decorative details point to a “Northern and Southern Dynasties style”, and that suggested without further textual evidence, it would still safe to date it as “not later than the Tang dynasty”.<sup>274</sup> Nevertheless, drawing from the extensive material remains of ancient Chinese pagodas, Bo Lao has shown through a comparative study that the details highlighted by Liang in fact suggest a Tang dynasty date.<sup>275</sup> According to Chen Tao, who conducted the most recent and extensive investigation of the Patriarch Pagoda, it may indeed be a structure constructed during the Tang dynasty to relocate Jietuo's relics.<sup>276</sup> The meaning of “patriarch” in the “Patriarch

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<sup>273</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng first used this name as its identification in his 1944-45 report, and explained that the name was a conventionally used by monks at Foguangsi (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1945, 8). Note that this pagoda does not have any stele inscription or name plaque extant, and this name is not mentioned in any other textual records. From some of my analyses below, however, “Patriarch Pagoda” may have been a very precise identification.

<sup>274</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1945, 9. The decorative details he listed as evidence for Northern and Southern dynasties style include its chaitya arch, lotus columns (束蓮柱), painted inverted-V-shaped intercolumnar-brackets (人字栱), and the profile of the rows of lotus petals used to decorate the upper registers of the pagoda. This initial observation has led to later stylistic dating ranging from Northern Wei, Northern Qi to the Sui and Tang period. For instance, Luo Zhenwen dated the Patriarch Pagoda to Northern Qi (Luo Zhenwen 1985); Cao Xun also believed it was built in Northern Qi (Cao Xun 2008, 108-14); Zhang Yuhuan first suggested a Tang dynasty date, but later converted to Northern Wei (Zhang Yuhuan 1988, 247-282, and id. 2000). In the Liu Tun-chen edited *History of Ancient Chinese Architecture*, the Patriarch Pagoda was listed under the Tang dynasty (Liu Tun-chen ed. 1984), and the Fu Xi'nian edited five-volume *History of Ancient Chinese Architecture*, it was stylistically dated to Sui-Tang period (Fu Xi'nian, ed. 2001, 521-522)

<sup>275</sup> Bo Lao 1986, 13-17.

<sup>276</sup> Chen Tao 2009, 65-135. Further discussions of this issue, with an emphasis on the relation between the founding of the Patriarch Pagoda and the Buddha Hall, are given in a later section.

Pagoda”, therefore, was multifold, referring to the creator of the “Visualization Buddha’s Radiance” and more importantly, implying that Jietuo was the founder of the monastery bearing the same name.

Jietuo’s numerous audiences with the Great Sage of Mañjuśrī probably sufficed to attract the imperial favors and veneration of the Tang court. After all, it was believed that Mañjuśrī would show himself to only those he was hoping to assist. Yet as I demonstrate in the following section, there may have been another essential factor that the recognized name of “*foguang*” was able to garner patronage from Empress Wu herself. Before her intensified activities related to Mount Wutai in the Longshuo era (661-663 CE) and a special mission to Foguangsi in the following Linde era (664-665 CE), the six years of Xianqing 顯慶 (656-661 CE), which literally means celebrating the “*xian* (illustrious)”, began with her giving birth to the young prince Li Xian 李顯 (l.k.a. Li Zhe 李哲; 656-710 CE), and ended with her successful winning over a power struggle in which she had been engaged. Li Xian was bestowed with a Buddhist title “Prince Foguang 佛光王”, or “Prince of Buddha’s Radiance”, and was taken as a disciple by the eminent monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664 CE). One is left to wonder whether the choice of promoting *foguang guan* and naming the monastery Foguangsi was only coincidental.<sup>277</sup> What is even more

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<sup>277</sup> As I have discussed above, Mingyao was the main advocate for and successor to the *foguang guan* practice, through whom we learned about his teacher Jietuo. Given Mingyao’s close association with Huize, he must have had knowledge of the newborn Foguang Prince and could have potentially coined a series of *foguang* related legends and theories as a stunt for imperial patronage. According to Fazang, this strategy must have worked to some extent, and the imperial mission led by Huize “bestowed [Jietuo’s] descendant(s) (奉其蔭裔)” on their visit to Foguangsi. See *Avatamsaka Biographies* (T51n2073), 0169c. Needless to say, monks’ claiming imperial patronage was quite common and even encouraged under Empress Wu. For example,

extraordinary, however, was the unexpected turn of fate of Foguangsi because of its tie with Li Xian in Shenlong 神龍 1 (705 CE) when he was reinstated as Emperor Zhongzong after the falling out of power and subsequent death of the empress — a story that I further explore in the following sections.

## THE FOGUANG PRINCE AND HIS FOGUANG MONASTERIES

As a greatly esteemed figure during the reign of Emperor Taizong, Xuanzang initially received the support from the throne for his knowledge in foreign affairs during his nearly two-decade trip through Central and South Asia, and was repeatedly, though unsuccessfully, approached by the emperor who wished to recruit Xuanzang as his advisor.<sup>278</sup> Xuanzang remained a devoted advocate for Buddhism, admired by many Buddhist-leaning officials at court, and finally received recognition by the emperor in his final years for his merit as a monk.<sup>279</sup> Li Zhi 李治, who later became Emperor Gaozong, pandered to his father's respects for Xuanzang when he was still a prince,<sup>280</sup> and his

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another propagandist monk closely associated with the empress, Degan 德感 (b. ca. 640), was said to have visited Mount Wutai in 長安 2 (702 CE). Pleased by the omens Degan reported from Mount Wutai, Empress Wu honored him as the “Duke of the Principality of Changping County 昌平縣開國公” and promoted him to the abbot of the Qingchansi 清禪寺 overseeing Buddhist clergy of the capital city. Although the account was only found in a later source, the *Extended Record of [Mount] Qingliang* (T51n2099), 1107a, a piece of inscription from the Tower of the Seven Jewels discussed later confirmed Yanyi's record. Degan previously served as the administrator 都維那 of Foshoujisi 佛授記寺, and subsequently participating in high profile tasks as supervising the construction of the Tower of the Seven Jewels 七寶臺. For a sketch of Degan's activities under Empress Wu, see Antonino Forte 1976, 100-108.

<sup>278</sup> Stanley Weinstein 1987, 24-26.

<sup>279</sup> Stanley Weinstein 1987, 26-27.

<sup>280</sup> Jan Yu-hua 1985, 142-143. See also Liu Shu-fen 2009, 2. As mentioned above, it appears that Emperor Gaozong was never sincerely interested in the Buddhist cause. Nevertheless, as a prince, he was actively displaying his support for Xuanzang. For example, in Zhenguan 19 (645 CE), Li Zhi wrote the calligraphic titles for two sūtras Xuanzang translated; in Zhenguan 22 (648 CE), Li Zhi established the Ci'ensi in memory

preferential treatments towards Xuanzang continued into his early years in power.

Xuanzang was reported to have used his religious power to soothe Empress Wu's suffering from difficulties during pregnancy and delivery in Xianqing 1 (656 CE):

In the winter, during the tenth month, [the consort of] the Middle Palace (i.e., Empress Wu) was suffering [from impending labor]. [She] took refuge in the Three Jewels (i.e., became a Buddhist) and sought blessings and protection [from Xuanzang]. The Master stated [in a memorial]: “Your Majesty’s [health] will be sound and free from [delivery] pain. However, I hope that if you gave birth to a boy, please allow him to leave the household [to become a monk] after [he has] safely come into being.” [Xuanzang’s wish] was immediately granted by an imperial edict. 冬十月中宮在難。歸依三寶。請垂加祐。法師啓曰：聖體必安和無苦。然所懷者是男。平安之後。願聽出家。當蒙勅許。<sup>281</sup>

When Empress Wu finally gave birth to her fourth child,<sup>282</sup> it was said that:

Imperial proclamation came to the Master, saying that: “The Empress had already given birth, and it was indeed a boy. [He has] fine yet unique physiognomic features. Divine light filled the courtyard and shot up to light the entire sky. I, the Emperor,

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of Empress Zhangsun 長孫, and invited Xuanzang to supervise the sūtra translation project there; in the same year, when Emperor Taizong composed the preface “Preface to the Tripiṭaka Canon of Buddhism Commissioned by the Great Tang 大唐三藏聖教序”, Li Zhi followed suit and wrote the “An Eulogy of the Sage Buddha 述聖志”.

<sup>281</sup> *Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master* (T50n2053), 0270c.

<sup>282</sup> Her first child was Li Hong 李弘 (652-675 CE), who was bestowed the title “Prince of Dai 代王” in Yonghui 6 (655 CE) and recognized as the Crown Prince in Xianqing 1 (656 CE). Li Hong died in Shangyuan 上元 2 (675 CE), probably due to lung disease instead of the alleged murder by Empress Wu. Her second child, Princess Anding 安定公主 (d.u.) died prematurely. Her third child was Li Xian 李賢 (654-684 CE), who was bestowed the Prince of Lu 潞王 in Yonghui 6 (655 CE) and recognized as the Crown Prince in Shangyuan 2 (675 CE) after Li Hong’s death. Li Xian was removed of his Crown Prince status in Tiaolu 調露 2 (680 CE) when convicted of plotting an uprising. Previously, the subsequent death of Li Xian in Guangzhai 1 (684 CE) was also attributed to Empress Wu, but historic records suggest Qiu Shenji 丘神勣, who was guarding Li Xian during his house arrest at that time, was responsible for his death. It appears historians intended to smear Empress Wu by false allegation of murdering her first three children (Zhao Wenrun 2007, 29-40). After giving birth to her fourth child Li Xian 李顯 (l.k.a. Li Zhe 李哲; 656-710 CE) in Xianqing 1 (656 CE), Empress Wu and Emperor Gaozong had two more children. The fifth child was Li Dan 李旦 (f.k.a. Li Xulun 李旭輪, Li Lun 李輪; 662-716 CE) who later Empress Ruizong. The sixth child was Princess Taiping 太平公主 (d. 713 CE).

feel boundless in bliss. [People are] dancing with happiness in and out [of the palace]. [I] will not withdraw my promise [to let him become a Buddhist monk]. [I] hope the Master will pray for him. [His] Buddhist title was chosen to be “*foguang wang* (Prince of Buddha’s Radiance)”.

勅令報法師。皇后分難已訖。果生男。端正奇特。神光滿院。自庭燭天。朕歡喜無已。內外舞躍。必不違所許。願法師護念。號爲佛光王。<sup>283</sup>

Prince Foguang, or the “Prince of Buddha’s Radiance”, was Li Xian, who later became Emperor Zhongzong. One month after the prince was born, Xuanzang was summoned to tonsure for him. Upon an imperial edict, seven people were tonsured on the same day in the merit of Prince Foguang.

The above events were clearly documented in Xuanzang’s memorials, collected in the *Collected Memorials Sent by Monk Xuanzang* 寺沙門玄奘上表集. Similar accounts can also be found in Xuanzang’s biography, the *Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Ci’ensi of the Great Tang* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳, as well as two highly credible Tang dynasty Buddhist catalogues, the *Buddhist Records of the Kaiyuan Era* 開元釋教錄 and the *Newly Revised Buddhist Records of the Zhenyuan Era* 貞元新訂釋教錄.<sup>284</sup>

However, no mentioning of the name of “Prince of Buddha’s Radiance” appeared in official histories. The dismissal by official historians was to some extent a result of the eccentricity of the event itself, as there had not been any precedence for imperial princes who fully took up the monastic way of life. The major cause of their omission, however, probably lies in the gradual alienation of Xuanzang as Emperor Gaozong became

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<sup>283</sup> *Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master* (T50n2053), 0271b.

<sup>284</sup> The episode concerning manifestations of light at Li Xian’s birth was found in all the references cited above. Xuanzang’s biography offers the most detailed report in his involvement in the birth of prince Li Xian, or the later Emperor Zhongzong.

increasingly involved in the struggles for power in the Xianqing era against the so-called “powerful old ministers behind the throne (輔政舊臣)” — the faction of officials headed by Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (594-659 CE) and Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596-658 CE), who gained prestige during his father’s reign and were extremely friendly with Xuanzang.<sup>285</sup>

The power struggle that started in Yonghui 1 (650 CE) lasted for almost a decade, and was deeply associated with the rising of Wu Zetian.<sup>286</sup> The removal of the former Empress Wang 王皇后 and the coronation of Empress Wu in Yonghui 6 (655 CE), as well as the subsequent replacement of the crown prince marked a turning point. Both Zhangsun Wuji and Chu Suiliang were punished for their opposition, but it was only the start of their downfall.<sup>287</sup> Despite Xuanzang’s involvements with Empress Wu’s giving birth to a young prince in the following year, presumably an expression of his allegiance to the newly crowned queen, the pelting of political storms seemed too difficult to abide by after all.

In Xianqing 2 (657 CE), Chu Suiliang was further persecuted for allegedly plotting a rebellion. Soon after the fall of Chu Suiliang, Xuanzang requested to retire to Shaolinsi 少林寺 for *sūtra* translation, which Emperor Gaozong refused. Instead, Xuanzang was sent to Ximingsi 西明寺 in the following year. The execution of Zhangsun Wuji in Xianqing 4 (659 CE) marked the end of the cleansing of the Zhangsun clique. In the same year,

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<sup>285</sup> Lu Shu-fen briefly outlined the relationship between Xuanang and the Zhangsun clique (Liu Shu-fen 2009, 19-21).

<sup>286</sup> Initially, Emperor Gaozong promoted Liu Shi 柳奭 (d. 659 CE), a uncle of Empress Wang, as well as several other officials, hoping that they would balance the powers of the Zhangsun clique. However, they soon united forces in Yonghui 3 (652 CE) in the official designation of crown prince.

<sup>287</sup> Huang Yongnian 1981, 81-89. See also Andrew Eisenberg 2012, 45-69.

Xuanzang was finally granted approval to withdraw to the remote Yuhuasi 玉華寺. He died five years later.<sup>288</sup> It has been pointed out that odd enough, as a greatly esteemed monk, Xuanzang did not receive any official services for his funeral, nor was he given any posthumous titles.<sup>289</sup> Xuanzang had become such a politically sensitive figure that his disciples even felt the need to hide his biography.<sup>290</sup>

Seen in this context, it is not surprising that the court soon got rid of the title given to the young prince Li Xian at birth in Xianqing 1 (656 CE) and renamed him as the “Prince of Zhou 周王” the following year.<sup>291</sup> Although only having had a nominal master-disciple relationship with Xuanzang when he was a young prince,<sup>292</sup> once reinstated as Emperor Zhongzong in Shenlong 1 (705 CE), he restored the political prominence of Xuanzang, conferring his master a posthumous title the “Great and Perfectly Awakened One 大遍覺”. The emperor also personally composed a eulogy for Xuanzang’s portrait, which was sent for enshrinement in the Great Ci’ensi 大慈恩寺 in a jeweled palanquin. In addition to Emperor Zhongzong’s personal piety towards Buddhism, it has been pointed out that his

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<sup>288</sup> Liu Shu-fen provided an instrumental chart comparing the major events in the late years of Xuanzang’s life in relation to a timeline of the political events taking place in the Tang imperial court, see Liu Shu-fen 2009, 58-64.

<sup>289</sup> For the events surrounding the death and burial of Xuanzang in Linde 1 (664 CE) and the relocation of his tomb in Zongzhang 2 (669 CE), see Liu Shu-fen 2009, 75-91.

<sup>290</sup> For discussions on the compiling of Xuanzang’s biography by Huili 慧立 (var. 惠立; 614- ca. 678-685 CE) the later revising by Yanzong 彦棕 (627-649 CE), see Liu Shu-fen 2009, 4-13.

<sup>291</sup> He was later renamed Li Zhe 李哲 and retitled again as the Prince of Ying 英王 in Yifeng 儀鳳 2 (677 CE). See *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f7, 1a. For the matter of convenience, however, I referred to him as Li Xian throughout the main text.

<sup>292</sup> Some scholars have claimed that the young prince Li Xian formed a close relationship with Xuanzang (see, for instance, Sun Yinggang 2003, 131-132, and Chen Jinhua 2004 c, 121). Others, such as Liu Shu-fen, has argued that this association to be more legendary than based on reality (Liu Shu-fen 2009, 45-47).



recognition of Xuanzang must have been politically charged as well. His personal tie with Xuanzang would undoubtedly help legitimizing him as a Buddhist ruler<sup>293</sup>

Most notably, Emperor Zhongzong stepped up to reclaim his Buddhist title “Foguang 佛光 (Buddha’s Radiance)”. Two structures were established under the name “Foguansi 佛光寺” in the palatial cities of Western Capital Chang’an and Eastern Capital Luoyang.<sup>294</sup> The Foguansi of Chang’an was located at the old residence of Xuanzang,<sup>295</sup> while its counterpart in Luoyang was renovated based on the ruins of the Heavenly Hall 天堂.<sup>296</sup> Both space served as the symbolic “inner *bodhimanda* 內道場 (i.e., palace chapel)”

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<sup>293</sup> Sun Yinggang 2003, 131-132.

<sup>294</sup> *Buddhist Records of the Kaiyuan Era* 開元釋教錄 (T552154) and *Newly Revised Buddhist Records of the Zhenyuan Era* 貞元新訂釋教錄 (T55n2157). Xuanzang’s biography was released in Chuigong 4 (688 CE), predating the construction of both structures. Therefore, it is not surprising that it did not contain any record of Foguansi.

<sup>295</sup> The two Tang Buddhist catalogues only said it was Xuanzang’s old residence. *Review of the Cities and Wards at the Two Capitals of the Tang Dynasty* 唐兩京城坊考, citing a certain “imperial edition of illustrations (閣本圖)” of the Chang’an Palace reprinted in the *Yongle Canon* 永樂大典, claims that there may have only been a Buddhist “hall (堂)” rather than a full “monastery (寺)”. This would explain why Foguansi 佛光寺 was referred to as [Great] Foguang Hall [大]佛光殿 in the *Buddhist Records of the Kaiyuan Era* and *Chang’an Gazetteer* 長安誌 further identified the Foguang Hall was the same as Shenglong Hall 神龍殿, probably a renaming that occurred after Emperor Zhongzong’s reign.

<sup>296</sup> The *Review of the Cities and Wards at the Two Capitals of the Tang Dynasty* noted that after suffering a fire, the Heavenly Hall was deserted for a while, during which time the site was nicknamed the Rear Deserted Hall 端廢殿. It then said the place was later used for constructing the Foguansi, but did not specify a date. The building of Foguansi on the ruins of the Heavenly Hall may well occurred a decade later in Shenlong 1 (705 CE), when its counterpart was established in Chang’an. The building lasted until being burned down again in Kaiyuan 28 (740 CE). Detailed discussions about the Luminous Hall 明堂 and the Heavenly Hall 天堂 built by Empress Wu can also be found in Antonino Forte’s monograph (Antonino Forte 1988). Note that Antonino Forte misdated the establishment of Foguansi in the Luoyang Palace due to his misreading of *Review of the Cities and Wards at the Two Capitals of the Tang Dynasty*. Fort mistakenly interpreted the passage that Empress Wu decreed the construction of the Foguansi at Luoyang in Zhengsheng 1 (695 CE), immediately after abandoning two unsuccessful attempts in the early 690s CE to reconstruct the pagoda of the Heavenly Hall (ibid., 71-72, for English translation of related passage). Chen Jinhua cited Antonino Forte and therefore also had the wrong date for the Foguansi at Luoyang (Chen Jinhua 2004 c, 115).

of the Tang court.<sup>297</sup> Following the Shenlong installment, two consecutive events of translating Buddhist *sūtras* were held inside the Foguang palace chapel in the inner palace in Chang'an in Shenlong 神龍 2 and 3 (706 and 707 CE), with Emperor Zhongzong personally taking the role of “recording the translation (筆受)”.<sup>298</sup> Hundreds of officials were said to have attended, with the empress and fellow concubines standing by in observation as well.<sup>299</sup> The ritual significance of these occasions can never be overstated, and its staging in the palace chapel, as well as its naming as “Foguang” must have been carefully contemplated.<sup>300</sup> Less discussed is a third Foguangsi, which must have stood on Mount Song 嵩山,<sup>301</sup> traditionally regarded as the “Central Marchmount 中嶽” but went through a Buddhist transformation in the early Tang period.<sup>302</sup> What was the association

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<sup>297</sup> For a comprehensive survey of Tang dynasty palace chapels, see Chen Jinhua 2004 c, 113-120. Note that Chen took Foguangsi as Empress Wu's palace chapel for a misreading explained in the previous note. In fact, only accounts of Great biankongsi 大遍空寺 can be verified as established by Empress Wu inside the Luoyang Palace, and indeed, there would be no reason to have two palace chapels for Luoyang at the same time.

<sup>298</sup> In Shenlong 2 (706 CE), the event was held for Yijing 義淨 (635-713 CE)'s translation of the *Sūtra of the Vows of the Medicine Buddha of Lapis Lazuli Crystal Radiance and Seven Past Buddhas* 藥師瑠璃光七佛本願功德經. In the following year, it was the commencement for Bodhiruci's translation project of the [Great] *Sūtra of the Heap of Jewels* [大]寶積經.

<sup>299</sup> Chen Jinhua 2004 c, 113-120.

<sup>300</sup> Different emperors seemed to prefer their own choice of palace chapels, which in a way, had distinctive marks of their reign period. As mentioned above, Empress Wu used her own palace chapel of Great Biankongsi. Following Emperor Zhongzong, Emperor Ruizong held similar events upon his enthronement, but the location was at the Hall of the Sweet Dew 甘露殿 of the Inner Palace instead.

<sup>301</sup> The Foguangsi on Mount Song was only mentioned in passing in the *Old Book of Tang* and the *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*. In his examination of the Tang monasteries, Sun Changwu mistakenly appended the above records under the entry of the Foguangsi in Chang'an (Sun Changwu 1996, 1-50). Shi Hongshuai pointed out Sun's mistake, nevertheless, he then mistook it as the Foguangsi established in Luoyang (Shi Hongshuai 1991 a, 134). To my knowledge, Antonino Forte was the first scholar to correctly point out the passages suggested the existence of a third Foguangsi located on Mount Song, and suggested it might have been renamed later (Antonino Forte 1988). Regrettably, however, Forte seems unaware of the Foguangsi located on Mount Wutai.

<sup>302</sup> The reference is only found in the *Old Book of Tang* in passing mention. It is not clear when the

between the Foguangsi on Mount Wutai and the rest of the Foguang monasteries? What does it mean to have a network of palace chapels and mountain monasteries established by Emperor Zhongzong sharing the same name as his Buddhist title? Before we can answer these questions, an examination of the Tang institutional Buddhism is in order.

#### STATE MONASTERIES AND DYNASTIC MONASTERIES OF THE TANG

The practice of systematically establishing a network of state-sponsored Buddhist institutions found its origins in the Sui dynasty, since official documents attested to an expansive network of “officially established monasteries (官立寺)” at the capital and in the prefectures throughout the empire.<sup>303</sup> Although we do not have the specific records concerning their founding date, Tsukamoto Zenryū had reminded us their official character as demonstrated by the dividing of śāīra in the Renshou 仁壽 era (601-604 CE).<sup>304</sup> The reign of Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu saw the continuation and expansion of the official monastery network. In Qianfeng 乾封 1 (666 CE), after performing the state sacrifices of *fengshan* 封禪 to the Eastern Marchmount, Mount Tai 泰山, in addition to adding three Buddhist monasteries and three Daoist temples within the boundaries of Yan prefecture 兗州 where Mount Tai was located, Emperor Gaozong instituted the first state-sponsored monastic network of the Tang through the erection of one Buddhist

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Foguangsi on Mount Song was founded, or whether it was indeed a part of Emperor Zhongzong’s Foguang network.

<sup>303</sup> Arthur F. Wright suggested that all the monasteries were named uniformly as the Great Xingguosi 大興國寺 (Arthur F. Wright 1957, 97). However, Antonino Forte had convincingly argued that the official monasteries likely had different names based on epigraphical evidence (Antonino Forte 1992, 217).

<sup>304</sup> Tsukamoto Zenryū 1974, 13-15.

monastery and one Daoist temple in every prefecture.<sup>305</sup>

Although references to this event were scarce in received official histories, epigraphic evidence suggests that the Qianfeng edict already had some of the traits that anticipated the best-known network of “Great Cloud Monasteries 大雲寺” instituted under Empress Wu in Tianshou 1 (690 CE), or the first year of her Great Zhou interregnum.<sup>306</sup> As Antonino Forte has pointed out, the fact that the state monasteries that were established were only Buddhist monasteries in this case shows that “Buddhism had succeeded in having the political establishment acknowledge its determining role in Chinese society and policy and in becoming consequently the dominant ideology.”<sup>307</sup> The Great Cloud Monasteries were religious centers playing a key role in the dissemination of the propaganda piece *Commentary to the Great Cloud Sūtra*, the coordination of directives of a universal Buddhist empire and the sustainment of the political power of its *śakravartin*,

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<sup>305</sup> Antonino Forte suggested like the six monasteries and temples of Yan prefecture, different monasteries and temples established in the prefecture had different names (Antonino Forte 1992, 219). Using additional epigraphic evidence, Nie Shunxin argued that those monasteries were in fact named uniformly. Initially, a precious stone with auspicious inscription was found in Sha prefecture 沙州, which led Emperor Gaozong to instituting a monastery named “Lingtu 靈圖” on site, in addition to monasteries and temples in each prefecture with the name “Wanshou 萬壽”. After performing the *fengshan* sacrifice to Marchmount Tai, however, because of a newly emerged auspices omen shown by the “Jingxing 景星 (Star of Virtue)”, Emperor Gaozong decided to the monasteries after the star instead. See Nie Shunxin 2012 b, 18-30.

<sup>306</sup> Antonino Forte provided the most extensive study of this topic. He noted that unlike two previous networks that included both Buddhist and Daoist institutions, the Great Cloud Monasteries of Empress Wu were all Buddhist. In addition, the edict of Tianshou 1 (690 CE) explicitly mentioned the founding of two monasteries at the two capital cities, which was a new development. The Great Cloud Monastery located in Luoyang in particular was referred to as the Central Great Cloud Monastery 中大雲寺, attesting to the status of the Eastern Capital as the seat of political power during the Great Zhou. See Antonino Forte 1992, 219-231. Forte’s study was followed by Nie Shunxin, who provided an extensive list of textual records concerning the Great Cloud Monasteries. See Nie Shunxin 2012 b, 32-45.

<sup>307</sup> Antonino Forte 1992, 222. See also id. 1976 and id. 1984, 301-345.

Empress Wu. Subsequent emperors of the Tang, including Emperors Zhongzong and Xuaanzong, employed similar tactics. Upon regaining power in Shenlong 1 (705 CE), Emperor Zhongzong decreed his own network of official monasteries, named uniformly as the “Midstream Resurgence 中興” monasteries or temples, and subsequently renamed as “Dragon-like Rise 龍興”.<sup>308</sup> The reign of Emperor Xuaanzong, on the other hand, witnessed the establishment of a network of “Kaiyuan 開元” monasteries and temples in Kaiyuan 26 (738 CE).<sup>309</sup>

However, how would the aforementioned monasteries of “Foguang 佛光” fit in the broader picture? Two additional systems of state-sponsored monasteries emerged in the Sui and Tang period need to be examined. The first is the network of metropolitan monasteries, built in select major cities that often include the Western and Eastern Capitals in contrast to the system designed to spread out to each prefecture of the empire. According to Empress Wu’s preface to the newly translated *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, her family’s former houses in the two capital cities were converted into “Taiyuan Monasteries 太原寺”,<sup>310</sup> established for the posthumous merits of Lady Yang in Xianheng 咸亨 1 (670 CE).<sup>311</sup> The name

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<sup>308</sup> The change was resulted from the worry that a term as “*zhongxing* 中興”, lit. midstream resurgence, or midway restoration, would suggest a rupture between Emperor Zhongzong and his own mother Empress Wu. Replacing it in Shenlong 3 (707 CE) with the term “*longxing* 龍興”, or dragon-like rise, was an attempt to discharge such implications. See Antonino Forte 1992, 232-233; Nie Shunxin 2012, 51-77.

<sup>309</sup> See Antonino Forte 1992, 235-238; Nie Shunxin 2012, 78-118.

<sup>310</sup> Additional reference can be found in the biography of Fazang written by Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn. Fazang was installed in the monastery by Empress Wu at its establishment, and served there until passing away.

<sup>311</sup> See R. W. L. Guisso 1978, 27-28, and Chen Jinhua 2002 a, 112, note 7, for Lady Yang’s influence on Empress Wu’s religious life.

“Taiyuan” was used corresponding to Lady Yang’s title as the “Princess of Taiyuan”,<sup>312</sup> which later changed as Empress Wu gradually rose in power and raised the posthumous ranks for her mother later.<sup>313</sup> Among the Taiyuan Monasteries, the best known was the Western Taiyuan Monastery 西太原寺 in Chang’an, which arguably became one of the most eminent cosmopolitan monasteries under Empress Wu.<sup>314</sup>

Until recently, however, Xu Wenming has revealed the possibility that Taiyuan Monasteries were founded in five cities, including Taiyuan in the north, Jingnan 荊南 in the south, Yangzhou 揚州 in the east, Chang’an in the west and Luoyang at center.<sup>315</sup> In Tianshou 天授 1 (690 CE), with the founding of her Great Zhou interregnum, Empress Wu promoted Taiyuan as the Northern Capital of the Empire. The Northern Taiyuan Monastery

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<sup>312</sup> Wu Zetian’s father, Wu Shihuo 武士護 (577-635 CE), worked under Emperor Gaozu in Taiyuan, accomplishing great service in Li’s uprising and the founding of the Tang. This regional tie was showcased in the title given to her late father, “Duke of Taiyuan 太原郡公” and “Prince of Taiyuan 太原郡王”, and to her late mother, “Princess of Taiyuan 太原王妃”. See Chen Jinhua 2007, 36 and 91-93. Wu Shihuo’s deeds were recounted in a commemorative stele commissioned by Empress Wu in Chang’an 1 (701 CE), entitled the “Stele for the Unsurpassable, Filial, Wise and August Emperor of the Great Zhou 大周無上孝明高皇帝碑 (a.k.a. Stele of the Coiling Dragon Terrace 攀龍臺碑)”. See R. W. L. Guisso 1978, 11-12, for an English translation. Guisso gave Shengli 聖歷 2 (699 CE) as the date of the stele.

<sup>313</sup> In Wenming 文明 1 (684 CE), the late Lady Yang was bestowed with the title “Princess of Wei 魏王妃”, in Yongchang 永昌 1 (689 CE) as the “Loyal and Filial Empress Dowager of Zhou 周忠孝太后”, in Tianshou 天授 1 (690 CE) as the “Filial, Wise and August Empress of the Great Zhou 大周孝明高皇后”, and in Changshou 長壽 2 (693 CE) as the “Unsurpassable, Filial, Wise and August Empress of the Great Zhou 大周無上孝明高皇后”. Over this period, the Taiyuan Monastery in Chang’an was successively known as the [Western] Monastery of the Wei 魏國[西]寺 (bet. 687-689 CE), Western Monastery of the Great Zhou 大周[西]寺 (690-705 CE), and [Western] Chongfusi [西]崇福寺 (or [Great] Chongfusi [大]崇福寺, briefly in 690 CE and after 705 CE). The monastery in Luoyang alone was briefly renamed as the Great Fuxiansi 大福先寺 (693-695 CE). See Xu Wenming 2009, 19; Chen Jinhua 2007, 524.

<sup>314</sup> The prefix “xi- (西)” was added to distinguish it from other Taiyuan Monasteries established as the same time. See the above note.

<sup>315</sup> Xu Wenming based his thesis on a close study of the “Memorial in Request of Official Plaque for the Northern and Western Monasteries of Wei 為魏國北寺西寺請迎寺額表” compiled by Li Qiao 李峤, as well as a later source from Song dynasty. See Xu Wenming 2009, 18.

北太原寺, subsequently renamed as the Northern Monastery of the Wei 魏國北寺 (687-689 CE), then the Northern Monastery of the Great Zhou 大周北寺 (690-705 CE) and finally the “Chongfusi of the Northern Capital 北都崇福寺” (705 CE onwards), was attested by textual records including inscriptions on a sūtra-pillar dated to Dazhong 11 (857 CE), extant in the Foguangsi on Mount Wutai. It is understandable that these memorial monasteries were based on old residences. The selection of locations were therefore also symbolic, based on the places where the memorialized lived. A similar system, although to a lesser scale, was adopted by Emperor Zhongzong, when he founded two monasteries in the Western and Eastern Capitals, respectively, both named Saintly and Good [Mother] 聖善寺, in memory of his late mother Empress Wu.<sup>316</sup>

The second is the network of mountain monasteries. As I have mentioned above, with the founding of the Sui dynasty in Kaihuang 1 (581 CE), Emperor Wen set up five Buddhist monasteries at the foot of the Five Marchmounts, which, according to the evaluation by Arthur F. Wright, “is the first instance of the use of Buddhist monks for the carrying-out of this important function.” Wright also highlighted the political importance of the system as it “automatically set up Buddhist establishments in key centers throughout the empire, associated Buddhism with, the most important and enduring nature divinities, and signaled the competence of Buddhist monks to maintain some of the most important

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<sup>316</sup> As Shi Hongshuai has pointed out, while the Monastery of Saintly and Good [Mother] in Chang’an was established in Shenlong 2 (706 CE), directly converted from the previous Midstream Resurgence Monastery, while its counterpart in Luoyang was not established until Jinglong 1 (707 CE). See Shi Hongshuai 1991 b, 248.

relationships with the forces of the natural world.”<sup>317</sup> Emperor Zhongzong seemed to have taken advantage of this system as well. A network of Avataṃsaka Monasteries was set up in both capitals as well as on Mount Wutai due to its rise as a prominent center for Avataṃsaka teachings in early Tang.<sup>318</sup>

Seen in the above context, Foguangsi network was extremely complex, uniting monasteries of differing natures under an umbrella organization working for the benefits of Emperor Zhongzong. The Foguangsi in Chang’an was inherently commemorative as it converted from Xuanzang’s old residence. At the same time, the Foguangsi in Luoyang, built on the ruins of Empress Wu’s Buddhist center, may have been a symbolic gesture promising the renaissance of Buddhist rule. By naming both the monasteries “Foguang”, Emperor Zhongzong highlighted his entitlement as Xuanzang’s disciple and his legitimacy as a new Buddhist ruler. In addition to the Foguangsi at both capitals that were used as palace chapels, the preexisting Foguangsi on Mount Wutai would appear as a propitious omen, allowing Emperor Zhongzong to harness the religious powers of the sanctified

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<sup>317</sup> Arthur F. Wright 1957, 96-97.

<sup>318</sup> According to an account written by a Korean monk Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn, some time after Emperor Zhongzong regained power, Fazang sent an memorial proposing to the construction of a monastery named “Avataṃsaka 華嚴” at Mont Qingliang (a.k.a. Mount Wutai), in both capital cities, as well as the Wu 吳 and Yue 越 regions respectively to celebrate the merits generated by the newly translated *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. See *Biography of the Preceptor Fazang, the Late Bhadanta-Translator and Abbot of Great Jianfusi of the Tang* 唐大薦福寺故寺主翻經大德法藏和尚傳 (T50n2054), 0284b. The text was written around Tianyou 天祐 1 (904 CE) and printed in Da’an 大安 8 (1082 CE) under the dominion of the Liao. For a study of the document, see Chen Jinhua 2007, 41-63. Note that a contradictory account was found in Yanyi’s *Expanded Record* in which he attributed the renaming as in honor of Chengguan’s compilation of the *Commentary to the Great Corrective and Expansive Sūtra of the Buddha’s Avataṃsaka*. See *Expanded Record* (T51n2099), 1103c. Nevertheless, this account was most likely mistaken, since prior to finishing the *Commentary*, Chengguan already referred to himself as residing in the Great Avataṃsaka Monastery of Mount Qingliang.



Buddhist center. The Foguangsi on Mount Song appeared to be a new addition to the group, and it seems that by establishing them in both metropolitan and mountainous sites, the Foguangsi network offered a combination of these two aforementioned models. It was not clear whether or not more Foguangsi existed. Nevertheless, the four locations discussed above are suffice to illustrate the powerfully symbolic use of the physical environment by the political regime of the Tang.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> In discussing the construction projects for legitimization under the Tang dynasty, Ho Puay-peng reminded us of the iconic powers of architecture and landscape within their socio-historical contexts. See Ho Puay-peng 1999, 101-126. Ho based his arguments on the work by Lawrence J. Vale, which I also find relevant to the current discussion. See Lawrence J. Vale 1992.

## CHAPTER 2 A NETWORK OF MONASTERY AND PATRONAGE

Entering into the eighth century, China had completed its emergence as a new leading Buddhist empire, with Mount Wutai as its epicenter in this image. In the “Preface to [the Translations of] Sacred Teachings [Prepared by] the Tripiṭaka Master 三藏聖教序” composed by Emperor Zhongzong after he was re-enthroned in Shenlong 神龍 1 (705 CE),<sup>320</sup> he remarked with overflowing pride:

Since we the Great Tang conquered All under Heaven, [our achievements] surpassed the Chao and Sui clans, and diminished the [Fu]xi and Xuan[yuan] emperors. The glory of the Three Sages was restored, and the ten thousand states all came under unification. Whereas the [national] power is established within the border, its benefits should spread beyond all limits. [...] [We] raised the Sun of Buddhism again and filled up the gaps of the Indra’s Heaven. The Dragon Palace installed all its eight columns, and the Five Peaks vied for supremacy with the Vulture Peak. Nowhere else is worthy except the [Tang] Imperial Court to expand the teachings of the Buddha!

我大唐之有天下也。上凌巢燧。俯視羲軒。三聖重光。萬邦一統。威加有截。澤被無垠。掩坤絡以還淳。互乾維而獻款。再懸佛日。重補梵天。龍宮將八柱齊安。鸞嶺共五峯爭峻。大弘釋教。諒屬皇朝者焉。<sup>321</sup>

The Dragon Palace with its eight magnificent columns may have been a reference to the second Luminous Hall 明堂 built under Empress Wu,<sup>322</sup> transformed from a sacred center

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<sup>320</sup> Alternate titles include the Preface of the “Midstream Resurgence of the Great Tang 大唐中興” or the “Dragon-like Rise of the Great Tang 大唐龍興”; Chen Jinhua discussed the attributed date of this preface in Chen Jinhua 2004 d, 3-27.

<sup>321</sup> Collected in the *Complete Writings of the Tang* 全唐文. According to Chen Jinhua, there are at least another four extant versions of this preface, see Chen Jinhua 2004 d, 3.

<sup>322</sup> The Luminous Hall of Empress Wu was also known as the “Communicating with Heaven Palace 通天宮”. According to a record about Emperor Xuanzong’s reconstruction of the palace, we are informed that the third story of this structure was a Buddhist pagoda, and the eight columns that supported the roof structure were each decorated with a coiling dragon. See Antonino Forte 1988, 159.

of Confucian worship to a Buddhist monument under her reign, and still standing at the time when the preface was written. The Five Peaks clearly points to the Wutai Mountains, whose significance was recognized as on par with the Vulture Peak of India.

However, after the death of the “model Buddhist emperor” Zhongzong, who “seems to have been the first male Tang ruler who was a thoroughly devout Buddhist”,<sup>323</sup> the Buddhist establishment suffered major setbacks under the successive rule of Emperors Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 684-690 CE; re-instated 710-712 CE) and his son Xuaanzong<sup>324</sup> 玄宗 (r. 712-756 CE).<sup>325</sup> At the wake of the An Lushan Rebellion in Tianbao 天寶 15 (756 CE), however, in their quest for spiritual solutions to the enormous social problems created by warfare, the courts of Emperors Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756-762 CE) and Daizong 代宗 (r. 762-779 CE) re-embraced Buddhism, especially the esoteric sect, with religious frenzy. The subsequent revival of Mañjuśrī’s realm around the mid-Tang period was essentially resulted from the resolution of powerful monks, especially the esoteric master Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (abbr. 不空, 705-774 CE), who emerged to play the determinate role through the time of Emperors Xuaanzong, Suzong and Daizong.

Amoghavajra’s use of the Buddhist ideological apparatus for the protection of the

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<sup>323</sup> For an overall of the pious acts of Emperor Zhongzong, see Stanley Weinstein 1987, 47-49.

<sup>324</sup> In order to distinguish Emperors Xuánzong 玄宗 and Xuānzong 宣宗 of the Tang, Romanization of the former’s name is changed into Xuaanzong.

<sup>325</sup> Under the brief reign of Emperor Ruizong, the pro-Buddhist policies pursued by Empress Wu and Emperor Zhongzong was reversed. For Xuaanzong, quite like Emperors Gaozu and Taizong whom he intentionally set as models of sage rulers, he began his reign determined to limit the political and economic powers of the Buddhist church, while actively promoting Daoism as his state ideology. Exceptions were made for the now increasing popular esoteric Buddhism, whose emphasis on magical powers was very akin to that of Daoism, and therefore attracted the interests of the Emperor. See Stanley Weinstein 1987, 49.

nation was so deeply intertwined with his activities at Mount Wutai, especially the promotion of the Mañjuśrī cult and the building of a Golden Pavilion for the deity, both of which became symbolically preeminent for Imperial Buddhist patronage for centuries to come. During the time of Amoghavajra, Foguangsi continued to be revered as one of the “Five Monasteries of Mount Wutai 五臺五寺” along with Qingliangsi 清涼寺 (Monastery of Clear and Cold), Huayansi 華嚴寺 (Avatamsaka Monastery), Yuhuasi 玉花寺 (Jade Blossom Monastery) and Amoghavajra’s headquarter, the Jin’gesi 金閣寺 (Monastery of the Golden Pavilion). Given the abundant textual materials left from Amoghavajra and his disciples,<sup>326</sup> it is possible to get a rare glimpse of the network of patronage and management of construction through the well-documented projects at Jin’gesi, which is discussed in detail in this chapter.

It is clear that the development at Mount Wutai and its sharp esoteric turn under Amoghavajra was also much driven by political needs. However, compared with the period

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<sup>326</sup> Collection of Memorials by the Great Monk Amoghavajra of Critical Wisdom and Vast Knowledge, the Tripiṭaka Master, bestowed as the Grand Excellency of Works under Emperor Daizong 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (T52n2120), compiled by his disciple Yuanzhao 圓照 in ca. Dali 13 (778 CE). The compilation also included decrees by Emperor Daizong and memorials by Amoghavajra’s disciples. For a study of the text, as well as an English summary of its contents, see Raffaello Orlando 1981, 38-103. A full English translation of Amoghavajra’s testament collected in the text was provided in *ibid.*, 104-130. Raffaello Orlando also provided full translations of the two major biography sources of Amoghavajra in *ibid.*, 131-171, namely the Account of Conduct of the Late Amoghavajra, [Monk of] Great Virtue, Great Critical Wisdom and Vast Knowledge, Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Tang, who was bestowed the Grand Excellency of Works 大唐故大德贈司空大辨正廣智不空三藏行狀 (T50n2056); and an inscription entitled “Memorial Stele for the Late [Monk of] Great Virtue, Commander Ceremonially Equal to the Three Dignitaries, Probationary Director of the State Ceremonies, Duke of Su, Monk of Great Critical Wisdom and Vast Knowledge, and Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Xingshansi of the Great Tang 大唐故大德開府儀同三司試鴻臚卿肅國公大興善寺大廣智三藏和上之碑”. The latter was included in the texts collected by Yuanzhao.

of initial prosperity under Empress Wu, more players were increasingly involved in the process. I aim to draw attention a group of eunuch officials working in collation with Amoghavajra, who were very devoted Buddhists themselves, and were very instrumental in helping Amoghavajra profoundly transforming the religious landscape towards the mid-Tang period.

The rise of the power of eunuchs had amounted to unprecedented levels during the reign of Emperor Suzong and especially of Emperor Daizong, and eunuch-generals gradually became regular power-holders at court.<sup>327</sup> This development took on permanent, institutional form from the reign of Emperor Daizong onward, under whom the eunuch led “Army of Divine Strategy 神策軍” earned its official recognition.<sup>328</sup> In addition, the establishment of the “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue 功德使” system under Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 779-805 CE)<sup>329</sup> signified a fundamental change followed the rise to power

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<sup>327</sup> During the early years of the Tang dynasty, eunuchs were at first confined to the “Department of Administration of the Inner Palace 內侍省” and to a similar establishment in the household of the crown prince, where their duties were entirely restricted to the menial. Although some individuals received high rank and power, they were essentially forbidden to hold high office in the first century of the Tang dynasty. Starting from the reign of Emperor Zhongzong, some eunuchs were trained as soldiers and served in the Imperial Guard. Since most eunuchs were persons whose lack of birth or education would have made them inappropriate to serve as civilian officials, they were rewarded with high military titles, and soon this favor and trust converted into positions of authority. Gradually, individual eunuchs gained controlled access to the emperor, came to participate in court decisions, made provincial appointments, and even engaged in armed interventions in the imperial succession.

<sup>328</sup> During a Tibetan attack on the imperial capital in Baoying 寶應 2 (763 CE), a eunuch for the first time emerged as commander of the central army. After fleeing from the capital, Emperor Daizong was rescued by the Divine Strategy Army commanded by the eunuch Yu Chaoen 魚朝恩 (721-770 CE). Upon his return to the city, Emperor Daizong incorporated this force into the palace guard, where it became a major component of the central army. Regularly commanded by eunuchs in the following decades, the Divine Strategy Army formed an enduring base for eunuch domination of the court. See J. K. Rideout 1949, 55-65; Wang Shou-nan 1971, 19-48.

<sup>329</sup> Note that a position with the title “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue [修]功德使”, was known to have

of the eunuchs in regards to their control over the Buddhist and Daoist clergies. The powerful positions of “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue of the Left and Right Avenues 左右街功德使”, for example, were routinely held by eunuch-generals who concurrently as the “Left and Right Palace Commandant-protectors of the Army of Divine Strategy 左右神策軍護軍中尉”.<sup>330</sup>

Notwithstanding the enormous profits eunuch officials had drew from Buddhist commissions, it should be noted that many eunuchs’ attraction to Buddhism was not just as a means to profit. For example, when efforts to curb the power of the Buddhist church resulted in the Buddhist persecution under Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840-846 CE) in the Huichang 會昌 era (841-846 CE),<sup>331</sup> the then Commissioner of Merit and Virtue, Chou Shiliang 仇士良 (d. 843 CE) was forced to resign due to his persistent support for Buddhism and consequent defiance of the imperial will.<sup>332</sup> In addition to the natural

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temporarily existed during the time of Emperor Zhongzong. However, it seems the position was then occupied by both monks and regular officials, instead of eunuch-generals. During the reign of Emperor Daizong, there was a system known as the “Outer and Inner Commissioners of Merit and Virtue 內外功德使”, which was abolished after his death. It was during Emperor Dezong’s reign that the “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue of the Left and Right Avenues 左右街功德使” were officially established. See Tsukamoto Zenryū 1933, 368-406; Tang Yijie 1985, 60-65.

<sup>330</sup> The religious population was originally placed under the administration of the “Bureau of Receptions 司賓”. In Yanzai 延載 1 (694 CE), this responsibility was delegated to the “Bureau of Sacrifices 祠部” by Empress Wu, and in Kaiyuan 開元 15 (727 CE) to the “Court of State Ceremonial 鴻臚寺” by Emperor Xuaanzong. With the Commissioners of Merit and Virtue system was officially established by Emperor Dezong, eunuchs exercised almost complete official control over the activities of both Buddhists and Daoists.

<sup>331</sup> Stanley Weinstein 1987, 114-136. The Japanese monk Ennin was travelling in China while Emperor Wuzong launched the persecution, and devoted much attention recording this event. Reportedly, offering to monasteries and making pilgrimages to Mount Wutai were banned, monasteries and nunneries were shut down, monks and nuns were forced to resume their secular identities. Those who refused to conform were reported to have fled the mountain. See Edwin O. Reischauer 1955 b, for discussion of Ennin’s record on the Huichang Persecution.

<sup>332</sup> Liu Shu-fen 2008, 60-70.

inclination created by their upbringing in the Buddhist faith, considered the religion of both the common people and the women of the Inner Palace, I discuss other factors that contributed to eunuchs' passion for Buddhism. Most notably, a group of miraculous stories popular at the time advocated karma gains for eunuchs who practiced Buddhism on Mount Wutai, and brought the importance of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* back to focus.

In my discussion, I will also shed light on the patronage of the only extant Tang wooden structure at the Foguangsi, the Buddha Hall. According to C-14 dating results, the building was initially built around late-seventh to mid-eighth century, most likely during the short reign of Emperor Zhongzong in early eighth century. However, according to epigraphical evidence from the Dazhong 大中 era (847-860 CE), it must have went through a major renovation during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 847-860 CE). Emperor Xuanzong was enthroned following the aftermath of the “Huichang Persecution” against Buddhism, and it is possible Buddha Hall suffered during the persecution, which resulted in the imperial renovation project with the support of a Commissioner of Merit and Virtue. In the last section of this chapter, I discuss the perceived image of Emperor Xuanzong as an important figure in the revival of Buddhism in the late Tang period and the implications of his religious actives at Mount Wutai. In addition, I closely examine the case of the Buddha Hall at Foguangsi, where votive inscriptions and donors' information present a rare window into the religious undertakings of the court and socio-political contexts of late Tang.

## BUDDHIST MASTER OF THE STATE AND THE ESOTERIZATION OF MAÑJUŚRĪ'S CULT

Abundant sources on the biographical information of Amoghavajra are available thanks to the hard work of scholars of religious history.<sup>333</sup> Therefore, a brief introduction will suffice here. Ordained in Kaiyuan 開元 7 (719 CE), Amoghavajra first served at his master, Vajrabodhi 金剛智 (671-741 CE)'s side for over twenty years. After Vajrabodhi's death, Amoghavajra travelled to Indic Regions via the sea-route. He was subsequently summoned back to the court of Emperor Xuaanzong where he remained for the next decade. Amoghavajra did not have a chance to flex his muscles until the court was faced with the aftermath of the An Lushan Rebellion in Tianbao 天寶 15 (756 CE).

When violent rebellion and warfare rent the Tang Imperium, Amoghavajra was employed to defeat military challenges to Tang political authority. It was said that with the Buddhist teachings Amoghavajra brought back from the Indic regions during his travel in the early Tianbao era, he and his disciples believed to be able to kill enemies and route opposing armies through their violent application of these Buddhist rituals.<sup>334</sup> During the successive reigns of Emperors Suzong and Daizong, Amoghavajra had emerged as a powerful confidant of the imperial family. He went on to obtain distinguished honorific titles and official positions including that of the "Master of the State 國師", and had been

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<sup>333</sup> In addition to Raffaello Orlando's PhD dissertation, which provided a helpful introduction to the primary sources on Amoghavajra (Raffaello Orlando 1981), Geoffrey C. Goble's PhD dissertation on Amoghavajra provides the most recent synthesis of previous studies (Geoffrey C. Goble 2012). Further references can be found in the bibliography compiled by Goble.

<sup>334</sup> Geoffrey C. Goble 2012, 132-172.



celebrated for developing systematic teachings of esoteric Buddhism in China.<sup>335</sup>

It was not clear that initially which aspects of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī had drawn Amoghavajra's attention among other esoteric deities.<sup>336</sup> However, it was evident that according to Amoghavajra's rhetoric, Mañjuśrī was a guardian deity for all emperors and states who occupied a central status in his magical solutions to worldly problems. As mentioned previously, the role of Mañjuśrī as a protective deity also had its roots in earlier Buddhist *sūtras*. Sure enough, Mañjuśrī appeared in his esoterized form,<sup>337</sup> the “Adamantine Boon 金剛利 (Skt. Vajratikṣṇa)” of the West,<sup>338</sup> in the *Transcendent Wisdom Sūtra of the Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經

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<sup>335</sup> Charles D. Orzech 1998, 135-167. For my usage of the term “esoteric”, see Orzech's informative discussion with extensive bibliographies, differentiating terms including “tantric”, “esoteric”, “*mijiao* 密教”, “*zhenyan/shingon* 真言”, and “Vajrayāna Buddhism” (ibid., 135-136, footnote 1). See also Geoffrey C. Goble 2012, 49-61.

<sup>336</sup> Raoul Birnbaum has suggested that Mañjuśrī might have been Amoghavajra's personal deity (Raoul Birnbaum 1986, 25-38). Iwasaki Hideo regarded the peculiar choice of the Mañjuśrī cult as having more to do with Emperor Daizong than with Amoghavajra's personal preference. He pointed out Emperor Daizong was associated with the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, and therefore required Mañjuśrī as the supporting Bodhisattva (Iwasaki Hideo 1993 a, 81-105; id. 1993 b, 249-251). While also attributing the decisive factor to Emperor Daizong, Nakata Mie pointed out a different association, with Emperor Daizong promoted as the Wheel Turning Sage King of the “One-Syllable Ākṣaravartin of the Uṣṇīṣa Buddha 一字佛頂輪王 (Skt. *Ekābodoṣṇīśacakravartin*)” to bring peace to the nation and lead the populace to salvation. In addition, she brought our attention to the fact that Amoghavajra's advocating for Jin'gesi had already started before the An Lushan Rebellion, and was linked to the officials who hoped to secure a solid foothold at court by creating a new ideology of kingship with Amoghavajra (Nakata Mie 2009, 40-58).

<sup>337</sup> It should be noted that although Amoghavajra brought the seeds of Mañjuśrī's “esoterization” into full fruition, the trend of “tantric” practices had already been slowly sifting into China since the third century, and the Mañjuśrī cult had inevitably been under its influence. Previous scholars have persuasively demonstrated that the esoteric tradition of Mañjuśrī cult under Emperor Daizong was shaped in early Tang period, see Yoritomi Motohiro 1986, 93-112; Nakata Mie 2009, 40-58. For instance, during Empress Wu's reign, with the arrival of Bodhiruci in Changshou 2 (693 CE), a number of proto-esoteric Buddhist scriptures were about Mañjuśrī.

<sup>338</sup> As glossed by Amoghavajra in the accompanying Chanting Rituals, the *Chanting Rituals for the Transcendent Wisdom Sūtra of the Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經陀羅尼念誦儀軌 (T19n0994), 0514b.

(hereafter the *Humane Kings Sūtra*), and was enlisted among the five powerful

*Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas*.<sup>339</sup>

Great King! I will command the *Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas* of the five directions to assemble and go protect any state wherever and whenever in the future the kings of states establish the Correct Teaching and protect the Three-Jewels [...] West, Adamantine Boon *Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva*, [his] hand grasping a diamond-sword and shedding golden light, together with four hundred thousand bodhisattvas will go to protect that state.<sup>340</sup>

大王。若未來世有諸國王。建立正法護三寶者。我令五方菩薩摩訶薩眾往護其國。[...] 西方金剛利菩薩摩訶薩。手持金剛劍放金色光。與四俱胝菩薩往護其國。<sup>341</sup>

Note that it was under Amoghavajra that a second translation of the *Humane Kings Sūtra* was produced on imperial order. As Charles D. Orzech has pointed out, the new recension of the scripture was a key element in Amoghavajra's nascent esoteric religious ideology, which expressed the union of mundane and super-mundane benefits, especially for the ruler and his empire.<sup>342</sup> Granted imperial permission, Amoghavajra repeatedly chanted “kingdom-protecting *Humane King* and *Secret Adornment* scriptures”<sup>343</sup> and performed rites on Mount Wutai to “establish the state as a field of merit”.<sup>344</sup>

In addition to propagating the *Humane Kings Sūtra*, Amoghavajra was involved in producing other scriptures related to the deity Mañjuśrī, as exemplified by the *Sūtra on the*

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<sup>339</sup> Paul M. Harrison 2000.

<sup>340</sup> Translation after Charles D. Orzech 1998, 268.

<sup>341</sup> T08n0246, 0843b-0843c.

<sup>342</sup> Charles D. Orzech 1998, 160-167, and 169-206. For an English translation of the scripture, see *ibid.*, 209-274.

<sup>343</sup> In the memorial, “*Human Kings* 仁王” refers to the *Sūtra of the Humane Kings* 仁王經 (a.k.a. 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經), and the *Secret Adornment Sūtra* 密嚴經 was also a retranslation of an earlier text.

<sup>344</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0835b-0835c.

*Merits and Virtue of Monasteries Adorned for the Great Sage Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī* 大聖文殊師利菩薩佛刹功德莊嚴經.<sup>345</sup> Amoghavajra first presented it to the throne in Dali 8 (773 CE) on the emperor's birthday,<sup>346</sup> and was tenacious in seeking permission to circulate the text even on his deathbed.<sup>347</sup> Amoghavajra also actively promoted Mount Wutai for the protection of the state in his late years, both as the mountain headquarters of Esoteric Buddhism and as a local devoted to Mañjuśrī.<sup>348</sup> Mount Wutai's status under Amoghavajra was best demonstrated by the repelling of a white perihelia comet in Dali 大歷 5 (770 CE), when Amoghavajra was sent to Mount Wutai to perform Buddhist rites in order to save the Tang Empire. A banquet sponsored by Emperor Daizong for ten thousand people was served there after the disappearance of the comet.<sup>349</sup>

Yet Amoghavajra's Buddhist undertakings were not by any means restrained to

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<sup>345</sup> The sūtra was included in the Taishō Tripiṭaka under T11n319.

<sup>346</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0842c. The exact month of the memorial was missing from the text, only showing "the thirteen day of Dali 8". However, it could be implied from the contents that the memorial was written for the occasion of Emperor Daizong's birthday, which falls on the thirteen day of the ten month.

<sup>347</sup> Other examples of Mañjuśrī related sūtras translated by Amoghavajra include the Diamond Pinnacle Yoga, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva Sūtra 金剛頂瑜伽文殊師利菩薩經 (T20n1171), the Five-syllable Dharani of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī Chapter of the Diamond Pinnacle Sūtra 金剛頂經曼殊室利菩薩五字心陀羅尼品 (T20n1173), and the Sūtra Spoken by Mañjuśrī and Various Transcendents about Lucky and Unlucky Days and Good and Bad Astral Lodgings 文殊師利菩薩及諸仙所說吉凶時日善惡宿曜經 (T21n1299).

<sup>348</sup> For Amoghavajra's interest in promoting Mount Wutai, Martin Lehnert contended the main reason lies in his determination to promote Mañjuśrī as the tutelary deity of the Tang dynasty (Martin Lehnert 2007, 262). Geoffrey Goble, on the other hand, suggested that Amoghavajra was more interested in Mount Wutai as a seat of Imperial Buddhism in the Tang than he was in Mañjuśrī, which was likely based on its proximity to the ruling Li clan's ancestral home in Taiyuan (Geoffrey C. Goble 2012, 253). Lin Wei-cheng speculated that Amoghavajra's interests in Mount Wutai was triggered by his emphases on the practice and benefits of *dhāraṇī*, and with the *Sūtra of the Buddha's Supreme Uṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī* being one of the most popular during the Tang period, Buddhapālita's legend on Mount Wutai might have inspired Amoghavajra (Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 139).

<sup>349</sup> *Old Book of Tang*, fascicle 11, 297; *New Book of Tang*, fascicle 32, 838; see also *Account of Conduct* (T50n2056), 293b; and *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0837b.

translating texts and performing rituals. He took full advantage of the generous imperial support and sought to spread his esoteric teaching through the distribution of icons and the building of edifices. In Dali 1 (766 CE), Amoghavajra submitted two memorials to Emperor Daizong requesting funds for constructions at the Jin'gesi 金閣寺 and the Yuhuasi 玉華寺. In the following year, he submitted another memorial requesting to keep the corvée labor for both of the monasteries.<sup>350</sup> In Dali 5 (770 CE), Amoghavajra submitted a memorial requesting a Mañjuśrī image to be installed in all monastic refectories, further promoting the superiority of the bodhisattva.<sup>351</sup> In the same year, he requested a Mañjuśrī Cloister 文殊院 to be established in Zhidesi 至德寺 in Taiyuan. In Dali 7 (772 CE), imperial edicts instructed a Mañjuśrī Cloister to be added to all monasteries and nunneries throughout the empire. Amoghavajra sent a memorial to the throne in gratitude, stating that:

Prostrating [myself] on the ground, [I] thought of Your Majesty who commenced the magical building projects of a Dharma King, and established extraordinary fields of merits. [Your Majesty] are making the True Presence of Mañjuśrī available for veneration all under heaven, which is a profound favor and fortune, especially for the black robed populace (i.e., monks). In addition, the Sage Mañjuśrī is the patriarch of all Buddhas, who was deeply compassionate with grand aspirations, who had sacrificed personal salvation and took the Mahāyāna path in order to guide [all sentient beings] to endless merits and bliss. The Śākyamuni Tathāgata of the past had the prophecy that the canons of the only true path (Skt. *ekayāna*) would prosper in China, and that there would be an Ultimate Sage King ruling his empire with the

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<sup>350</sup> It was in the same year that Emperor Daizong granted Amoghavajra's request to ordain monks at each of the five principle monasteries on Wutai. See the *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), for Jin'gesi, see 0834a-0834b, and 0835a-0835b, for Yuhuasi, see 0834b. For Amoghavajra's building activities on Mount Wutai, see also Raoul Birnbaum 1983, 25-38; Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 139-154.

<sup>351</sup> T52n2120, 0837a.

Mahāyāna teachings. Eight hundred years has passed. [I] humbly thought about all the sage and wise kings in the past, and indeed none could be compared to Your Majesty. How incredibly fortunate Amoghavajra is that he was born into the Sage Reign and could practice Mahāyāna Buddhism and serve Mañjuśrī. With imperial permission, [I] shall constantly chant the mantra of this Sage (i.e., Mañjuśrī) for the empire.

伏惟 陛下開法王之玄造。闢非常之福田。建文殊真容。使普天瞻仰。在於緇侶光幸尤深。且文殊聖者即諸佛祖師。大悲弘願不取正覺。大乘引導利樂無期。昔釋迦如來先有懸記。一乘典語興在中華。當有至聖帝王必以大乘理國。八百餘載。歷伏帝王聖賢多矣。實未有如陛下者也。不空何幸生遇聖朝介修大乘。奉事文殊師利。常以此聖真言奉為國家持誦。<sup>352</sup>

To this, Emperor Daizong replied with his own praise of the Great Sage, and further reassured Amoghavajra with his resolution to propagate the cult of Mañjuśrī.<sup>353</sup>

The decision to establish Mañjuśrī Cloisters systematically throughout the empire was undoubtedly influenced by Amoghavajra's persistent campaigning. Nevertheless, the correspondences indicate that it was directly initiated by the emperor, and therefore was a “top down” project. Two additional patterns emerge from the *Collection of Memorials*. In several cases, memorials were submitted by other officials, who sought imperial approval to carry out projects with Amoghavajra that they themselves would fund.<sup>354</sup> Most often, however, Amoghavajra took the role of the initiator to request permission for “local initiatives”. The following section explores the patron-client relationship and funding mechanisms of two major building projects overseen by Amoghavajra. Both projects were pavilions built for the Great Sage Mañjuśrī, and were located in the Great Xingshansi in the

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<sup>352</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0841c-0842a.

<sup>353</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0842a.

<sup>354</sup> For example, in a memorial written in Yongtai 永泰 1 (765 CE), Du Mian 杜冕 asked Emperor Daizong to grant him permission to allocate funds from his own provisions to support Amoghavajra.

Supreme Capital and the Jin'gesi at the Mount Wutai, respectively.

## **BUILDING THE MAÑJUŚRĪ PAVILIONS FOR THE EMPIRE**

Official construction projects were mainly managed under the jurisdiction of two imperial agencies during the Tang dynasty, namely the “Ministry of Works 工部” and the “Directorate for the Palace Buildings 將作監”.<sup>355</sup> The Ministry of Works was first established under the Sui dynasty in Kaihuang 開皇 2 (582 CE) among the top echelon collectively known as the “Six Ministries 六部”, and subsequently incorporated into the Tang court. It was chiefly a legislative body, whereas its cooperative agency, the Directorate for the Palace Buildings that was in place since the Qin dynasty, had direct executive powers and its responsibilities ranged from design, coordination building to maintenance. However, it seems that the construction projects of monasteries and temples were administrated separately, at least since Emperor Daizong, who established a temporary title called “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue [修]功德使”. Several different posts operated under this title, and notably, almost all identified commissioners who served for Emperor Daizong were closely associated with Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra.

To start with, although there has been considerable attention paid to a

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<sup>355</sup> For the range of administrative and executive powers of the two agencies, see the *Six Statutes of the Tang Dynasty* 唐六典 (S19), f1, 7a, and f23, 8b-10a. See also Fu Xi'nian ed. 2012, 18-29; cf. Charles O. Hucker 1985. In Longshuo era, the Ministry of Works was temporarily renamed as “Grand Executive Attendant 司平太常伯”, and the Directorate for the Palace Buildings as “Directorate for the Palace Buildings 繕工監”. Shortly before Empress Wu's Great Zhou Interregnum, the former was again renamed as “Minister of Works 冬官” (a title used for its archetype in the Zhou Dynasty), and the latter “Directorate of Buildings and Management 營繕監”. Neither of the systematic renaming of government agencies lasted very long, and the regular title was shortly reinstalled under Emperor Zhongzong in the Shenlong era.

Commissioner named Li Yuancong 李元琮,<sup>356</sup> a recent publication of his memorial stele inscription offers us further insights.<sup>357</sup> Li lost both parents at an early age,<sup>358</sup> and found himself serving a low post in the Northern Command of Imperial Armies 北衙禁軍 under Emperor Xuaanzong. Although the text appeared obscure on occasion, the description of Li “damaging [his own] body in search for the dharma (辱身求法)” suggests that Li Yuancong was very likely a eunuch, which would explain the passing mention of him in official histories as the “pawn (牙將)” of the notorious eunuch-general Yu Chao’en 魚朝恩.<sup>359</sup> His profile as a “family servant (家臣)” who “frequented the residence of the emperor (出入臥內)” further supports the suspicion. It also revealed that Li Yuancong was one of the “meritorious officials of Baoying era (寶應功臣)” led by eunuch official Li Fuguo 李輔國, who executed Empress Zhang to prevent a coup and thereby securing Emperor Daizong’s succession. This offered an important clue for Li Yuancong’s success under Emperor Daizong. He was promoted to the “Commandant of the Right Army of

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<sup>356</sup> Raffaello Orlando 1981; Geoffrey C. Goble 2012, 211-218.

<sup>357</sup> For a complete transcription of the stele inscription, see Fan Jing 2014, 250-257. The following description of Li Yuancong’s biography is mainly based on the stele inscription, while further comparing it with fragmentary information found in *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120) and *Account of Conduct* (T50n2056).

<sup>358</sup> According to the stele, Li was from a family of a Steppe ancestry, who was bestowed the imperial surname for their service fighting alongside Emperor Taizong. However, it was not clear whether the statement was based on actual history or merely a glorification of Li’s background. In any case, it was said that the generation of Li’s grandfather did not hold any official positions, and his parents were only given courtesy titles (probably posthumously). Even if Li Yuancong’s ancestors contributed in the founding of the Tang Empire, the clan must have went through sever decline by his time.

<sup>359</sup> Li did not receive any biographical treatment in official Tang histories. He was only mentioned once (with his name mistaken as Li Cong 李琮) in the biography of Xi Shimei 希士美. Li was said to have risen to the position of “Commissioner of Merits and Virtue of the Two Avenues 兩街功德使 (i.e. the Commissioner of Merits and Virtue of Capital City)” as Yu Chao’en’s pawn.

Militant Dragons 右龍武將軍” at the time Emperor Daizong ascended to the throne.

In addition, Li Yuancong was described as a devout Buddhist, a reputation reportedly initiated by Vajrabodhi during an *abhiṣeka* ritual.<sup>360</sup> When Amoghavajra decided to return to Sri Lanka, Li was dispatched as an imperial envoy to Nanhai 南海 commandery (present-day Guangzhou area) to invite him back to serve the court.<sup>361</sup> It was also confirmed that in Tianbao 13 (755 CE), Li Yuancong received methods of the Great Maṇḍala of the Five Divisions of the Diamond Realm from Amoghavajra and became his lay disciple.<sup>362</sup> Based on the stele, it seems that as soon as Emperor Daizong came to power, Li Yuancong was bestowed with several honorific titles and entrusted with the position of “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue Overseeing the Building of Monasteries and Temples in the Capital City 勾當京城諸寺觀修功德使”,<sup>363</sup> a position with considerable power over both Buddhist and Daoist churches.

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<sup>360</sup> The connection between Li Yuancong and Vajrabodhi was previously unknown, since it was not mentioned in received texts.

<sup>361</sup> As Fan Jing has pointed out, according to received biographies of Amoghavajra, Emperor Xuanzong permitted his return to Sri Lanka in Tianbao 8 (749 CE). However, when he reached Nanhai, an imperial order came and requested him to stay. In Tianbao 12 (753 CE), Amoghavajra received another imperial order to travel to Helong 河隴 area, where Geshe Han 哥舒翰 had invited him to visit. See *Account of Conduct* (T50n2056), 0293a, and “Biography of Amoghavajra of the Great Xingshansi of the Tang Imperial Capital 唐京兆大興善寺不空傳”, in *Song Biographies* (T50n2061), 0712c. On the other hand, the inscription suggested that Li Yuancong went on an imperial mission to Nanhai in Tianbao 11 (752 CE) and consulted Amoghavajra about Buddhist practices. Therefore, Li Yuancong was very likely the imperial envoy who passed on the imperial order to Amoghavajra requesting him stay in Tang.

<sup>362</sup> This episode is recorded in the *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), as well as the *Song Biographies* (T50n2061). The event was also recorded in *Dharma Transmission of the Esoteric Maṇḍala Teachings* 秘密曼荼羅教付法傳 by Kūkai 空海 (774-835 CE), see Tsukamoto Zenryū 1933, 368-406.

<sup>363</sup> While the stele recorded the title as “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue of the Capital City 京城修功德使”, the full name of the title was mentioned in *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 859b. In addition, as I discuss below, Li Yuancong’s successor, Liu Chongxun, was also mentioned with this full title, see *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 804c.



Meanwhile, another eunuch official Li Xiancheng 李憲誠, who served as the “Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the Inner Palace 內功德使”, apparently studied with Amoghavajra as well. The significant role of Li Yuancong and Li Xiancheng as Commissioner was unmistakably reflected in Amoghavajra’s “Testament 遺書”:

My lay disciple, the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue and Commander Ceremonially Equal to the Three Dignitaries, Li [Yuancong], has received instruction from me over thirty years, toiling sincerely and diligently. His filial heart is generous and deep. When I was in Hexi and Nanhai [Commanderies], he often sought instruction from me, and when I am at the Jingyingsi and the Court of State Ceremonial, he personally took care of me. [... It is my wish that] the monks in the cloister and the Commander Ceremonially Equal to the Three Dignitaries keep on working together constantly and keep in touch just as was done during my lifetime. Your duty requires that all of you dwell in peace and harmony together. Ever since the Eunuch Commissioner [of Palace], officer Li [Xiancheng] began to be my superintendent, he and I have never had the slightest disagreement. He frequently sent up memorials to the Emperor, and all were in accordance with His Majesty’s wishes and thoughts. Not only is Li [Xiancheng] of benefit to the nation, he is also a Bodhisattva who protects the Law. [... It is my wish that he] will protect and sustain the way of the Buddha just as he has done during my lifetime.<sup>364</sup>

俗弟子功德使李開府。依吾受法三十餘年。勤勞精誠。孝心厚深。河西南海問道往來。淨影鴻臚躬親供養。[...] 院中師僧開府往來檢校如吾在日。務須安存。上下和睦。監使李大夫自監吾已來無少違意。往來進奏皆契聖心。不但輔佐國家。亦為護法菩薩。[...] 佛法護持如吾在日。<sup>365</sup>

As seen above, in addition to their personal associations with Amoghavajra, their working relationships were also evident. A case in point was the building of a Mañjuśrī Pavilion 文殊閣 at the Great Xingshansi 大興善寺 with enormous support from the imperial family. The eunuch official Li Xiancheng had proven extremely instrumental in his commissioner

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<sup>364</sup> Translation modified after Raffaello Orlando 1981, 117-120.

<sup>365</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0844b.

position. He was the messenger and the intermediary, who helped in submitting memorials and petitions, and played an influential role as an envoy and an advocator on the emperor's side.

The building project commenced in the winter of Dali 7 (772 CE), following Emperor Daizong's edict that ordered for the establishment of Mañjuśrī Cloisters in every monastery throughout the empire. It was said that Emperor Daizong himself took up the role of the “Benefactor of the Pavilion (閣主)”, and other major patrons include the Honored Consort Dugu 獨孤貴妃, as well as both of her children the Prince of Han 韓王 and Princess Huayang 華陽公主. Thirty million cash<sup>366</sup> was allocated directly from the Palace Storehouses 內庫 to fund the project.<sup>367</sup> In the following year, Emperor Daizong personally made gifts of ritual icons and bestowed a vegetarian feast for the important building ritual called “raising the ridge beam (上梁)”.<sup>368</sup> The closing of the memorial, like many others related to the building of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion, included the recurring phrase, “[I] reverently send this memorial through the Eunuch Commissioner Li Xiancheng to

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<sup>366</sup> Here “cash” implies the basic currency unit “wen 文”. One “string of cash”, or “guan 貫”, equals one thousand cash.

<sup>367</sup> *Song Biographies* (T50n2061), 0713b

<sup>368</sup> In “Thanking the Emperor for Bestowing Steamed Cakes and Ceremonial Coins for [Celebrating the Ritual of] Raising the Ridge Beam of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion 恩賜文殊閣上梁蒸餅見錢等物”, Amoghavajra expressed his gratitude and listed the specific gifts from the emperor:

“Thanks to the previous imperial favor, [we] had chosen the fourteenth day of this month (i.e. the twelfth month) as the day to raise the ridge beam of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion. The Divine Kindness has condescended and made the special bestowment of a Thousand Monk Vegetarian Feast. [Bestowed items include] two hundred strings of vermilion [copper] coins for the beam raising ritual, two thousand steamed cakes, two thousand foreign-style cakes, two hundred strings of tea, ten pots of herb soup, ten plates of assorted cheese and honey pastries, fifteen sweet mandarins, and forty sticks of sugarcane.

其文殊閣先奉 恩命。取今月十四日上梁。天澤曲臨。特賜千僧齋飯。上梁赤錢二百貫。蒸餅二千顆。胡餅二千枚。茶二百串。香列湯十甕。蘇蜜食十合槃。甘橘子十五箇。甘蔗四十莖。” (T52n2120)

express my gratitude (謹附監使李憲誠奉表陳謝以聞)’.

Amoghavajra did not live to see the completion of the building. In his testament, he exhorted his disciples to continue working with Li Xiancheng:

I have reported to the Emperor that when a Sage [King] build a pavilion, he places the statue of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī downstairs, and put Chinese and Sanskrit texts for safekeeping upstairs, in eternal veneration for the state as a field of merit. The general structure of the building has already been set up, but the builders lack the funds for its decoration. Thus, the halls, corridors, gates, and other rooms remain unfinished. For all the remaining building materials, you get together with Official [Li Xiancheng] and make an account, and devise a good way of asking the Emperor to provide for its completion, and thus put an end to the matter. When the pavilion is finished, twenty-one monks should be assigned to read and recite Sūtras according to imperial order, in order to help the Emperor’s years, only then will my original vow be fulfilled.

吾奏 聖人造閣。下置文殊菩薩。上安漢梵之經。為國福田永代供養。閣則大改已成。作家欠錢裝飾未了。軒廊門屋僧房亦未成立。所有搏零落殘方磚木。汝共大夫計會善為聞奏修崇了却。閣成已後奉為 國家置三七僧。轉經念誦。永資 聖壽。滿吾本願。<sup>369</sup>

With the continuous help from Li Xiancheng, the pavilion was finally completed in Dali 10 (775 CE). Li Xiancheng announced an edict on behalf of the emperor, bestowing an official plaque to the pavilion, which was engraved with golden characters written by Emperor Daizong himself that read, “Protecting the Nation Pavilion of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī 大聖文殊鎮國之閣”.<sup>370</sup>

In a budget account, monks in charge of the project reported a total spending of 22,487,950 cash, including 13,052,000 cash (58%) directly supplied by the Palace

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<sup>369</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0844c.

<sup>370</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0842b

Storehouses.<sup>371</sup> Amoghavajra donated money and other processions equal to 1,080,503 cash (4.8%). The rest 8,355,447 cash (37.2%) were described as “outside” donations, which probably came from devout officials and commoners. According to the itemization of the spending (Table 2), the purchasing of materials accounted for about 60.8% of the budget, whereas the labor only about 39.2%.<sup>372</sup>

**Table 2. Itemized Budget Account for the Building of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion at the Great Xingshansi**

Categories	Spending Items and Amounts
<b>Building Materials</b> 12,429,658 cash <sup>373</sup> (12,887,808 cash spent, - 458,150 cash unused)	4,542,545 cash, used to purchase 610.5 pieces of square timber; 四千五百四十二貫五百四十五文。買方木六百一十根半。 974,810 cash, used to purchase 840 pieces of ash logs for rafters and columns; 九百七十四千八百一十文。買椽柱槐木共八百四根。 1,491,170 cash, used to purchase 55,698 pieces of bricks, tiles, owl's [tail] and animal-shaped [ridge decorations]; 一千四百九十一貫一百七十文。買磚瓦鸚獸五萬五千六百九十八口。 214,500 cash, used to purchase 700 bundles of planks, etc. 二百一十四千五百文。買棧七百束等用。 746,225 cash, used to purchase cypress for crafting doors, windows, balustrades, etc. 七百四十六千二百二十五文。買柏木造門窗鉤欄等用。 339,591 cash, used to purchase iron pegs etc. 三百三十九千五百九十一文。買釘鐵等用。 80,000 cash, used to make eight eave bells etc. for the two-storied pavilion; 八十千文。造閣上下兩層風箏八枚等用。 2,478,946 cash, used to make gold or copper [decorative] nail heads, animal masks and various kinds of metal buckles; 二千四百七十八貫九百四十六文。造金銅釘門獸諸雜鉸具用。 815,288 cash, used to purchase lime, ochre, black lacquer paint, etc. 八十五千二百八十八文。買石灰赤土黑蠟等用。

<sup>371</sup> The amount includes 11,152,000 in cash, ritual coins used for the beam raising ritual, and 4,117 rolls of silk.

<sup>372</sup> For estimation purposes, I made the calculation assuming the combined spending was equally divided between materials and labor.

<sup>373</sup> The itemized spending listed below adds up to 458,150 cash more than the 22,487,950 cash overall cost. The difference was probably deducted due to materials purchased but not used in the project, which were given in a separate list.

	<p>116,425 cash, used to purchase hump fibers etc. 一百一十六千四百二十五文。買麻櫛等用。</p> <p>162,548 cash, used to purchase bamboo sheets, reed sheets, coal, flowers, medicine, cutter, paper, brushes, oil, etc. 一百六十二貫五百四十八文。買趙越簾篠席箔炭花藥鑷紙筆油等用。</p> <p>52,510 cash, used to purchase glue, hump, ropes, and other miscellaneous items; 五十二貫五百一十文。買膠及麻打繩索諸雜等用。</p> <p>873,250 cash, used to purchase four carriages, six oxen, etc. 八百七十三貫二百五十文。買車四乘牛六頭等用。</p>
<p><b>Manual Labor</b> 7,555,205 cash</p>	<p>694,550 cash, used to hire workers to build the platform and dig ditches; 六百九十四千五百五十文。雇人築階并脫塹等用。</p> <p>2,288,300 cash, used to provide payments and foodstuffs for workers to do winnowing and wood-lifting works; 二千二百八十八貫三百文。雇人揚掀立木手功糧食等用。</p> <p>1,051,296 cash, used to provide payments and foodstuffs for workers to disassemble timber [scaffoldings]; 一千五十一貫二百九十六文。雇人解木手功糧食用。</p> <p>305,000 cash, used to provide payments and foodstuffs for workers to pave tiles on roofs; 三百五千文。雇人瓦舍及手功糧食等用。</p> <p>1,518,900 cash, used as payments and foodstuffs for [workers] making and installing cypress doors, windows, balustrades and exterior window shades; 一千五百一十八貫九百文。造估柏門窓鉤欄障日手功糧食等用。</p> <p>330,000 cash, used to provide payments and foodstuffs for earth-related masonry works; 三百三十貫文。泥壘作手功糧食等用。</p> <p>595,687 cash, used to pay square timber transportation fees to carriages and boats; 五百九十五千六百八十七文。雇人車船載方木脚錢等用。</p> <p>357,700 cash, used to provide payments and foodstuffs for workers to do brick-related masonry works; 三百五十七千七百文。雇人砌壘磚作手功糧食等用。</p> <p>100,982 cash, used to pay monks, wandering monks or outside commissioners to collect foodstuffs and recruit craftsmen; 一百貫九百八十二文。僧使行者外使催趁糧食設功匠等用。</p> <p>312,790 cash, used to hire various kinds of helpers and working hour keepers; 三百一十二千七百九十文。雇雜使年月日功人等用。</p>
<p><b>Combined</b> 2,503,087 cash</p>	<p>764,000 cash, used to purchase anchor stones and stones for other purposes, and to provide payments and foodstuffs to hard labors and skilled craftsmen; 七百六十四千文。買石碇諸雜石并雇車脚手功糧食等用。</p> <p>800,000 cash, used to purchase color pigments for Red and Green [architectural decoration], and to provide payments and foodstuffs [for workers] to paint patterns and make fabric decorations, etc. 八百貫文。買彩色解綠畫羅文軟作手功糧食等用。</p> <p>257,000 cash, used to purchase color pigments, and provide payments and foodstuffs for workers to mountain thrones (?) and partition screens (?)</p>

	<p>二百五十七貫文。雇人畫輦基隔窠并買彩色手功糧食等用。  682,087 cash, used to purchase beans, grass, grain, and medicine for the oxen  and pay for foodstuffs to the carriage riders  六百八十二貫八十七文。與牛買草豆麥牛藥逐車人餅錢等用。</p>
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More patrons continued to contribute to the project in the years to come, making donations and commissioning statues, murals, and so forth. The imperial association undoubtedly contributed to the prestigious status of the monastery and served as a major factor in attracting donors. The monk Huisheng 惠勝 once extolled in a memorial that “fellow contributors all benefitted from the power of the Emperor (隨喜者荷帝王之力)”.<sup>374</sup> Yet, needless to say, the main benefactor of the pavilion remains to be Emperor Daizong, and the major usage was to gain merits for his empire.

Another important building project among the numerous ones Amoghavajra oversaw was Jin’gesi of Mount Wutai and the construction of its Golden Pavilion in particular, whose art and architecture has been the subject of many studies. Here I turn to several previously overlooked aspects concerning its design and building process. In the “Petition for Permission to Allocate Alms to Aid Monk Daohuan’s Building Project at Jin’gesi 請捨衣鉢助僧道環修金閣寺” sent to Emperor Daizong in Yongtai 2 (766 CE), Amoghavajra first reported the situation that although an official plaque had been granted, the construction of Jin’gesi had not started. He went on to recount Daoyi 道義’s encounter with a conjured Golden Pavilion, in order to explain the origin and merits of the monastery:

The śramaṇa of the Great Xingshansi, the Probationary Director of the State Ceremonies with honorific rank of Tejin, Monk of Great Critical Wisdom and Vast

<sup>374</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0858a

Knowledge, Amoghavajra, makes the following petition:

The aforementioned monastery is the commemorative monastery for the sacred traces of Mañjuśrī witnessed in the [Five] Terrace Mountain in Kaiyuan 24 (736 CE) by Daoyi, a monk from Quzhou. Its construction was granted imperial permission. The late Sage [Emperor] had inscribed an official plaque, but the buildings were yet to be completed. [The monastery envisioned by Daoyi] was called the Jin'gesi (i.e., Monastery of the Golden Pavilion), which had thirteen cloisters, and reportedly housed a community of ten thousand monks. [It was said that] all towers, halls, gates and pavilions were made of fine gold. At the time when he had gone up to court [to make his report, Daoyi] submitted a set of drawings [of the monastery] to be kept in the palace. Everybody under Heaven wishes to see the Jin'gesi completed-- for who would not wish this? Daohuan, a monk from Zezhou, was ordered to deliver offerings to the mountain every day.<sup>375</sup>

右大興善寺沙門特進試鴻臚卿大廣智不空奏。上件寺先聖書額寺宇未成。准開元二十四年衢州僧道義至臺山所見文殊聖迹寺。號金閣院。有十三間居僧眾。云有萬人。臺殿門樓茲金所作。登時圖畫一本進入在內。天下百姓咸欲金閣寺成。人誰不願。令澤州僧道環日送供至山。<sup>376</sup>

From the set of drawings of the conjured Golden Pavilion reportedly produced by Daoyi and already presented to the throne, we are informed that the overall design of the monastery was based on his visionary journey. Then, Amoghavajra expressed his admiration for Daoyi and his resolution to complete the building for the merits of the Tang Empire:

As I greatly admire the vision foreseen by Master Daoyi, upon imperial order, [I] set my heart upon building the Golden Pavilion for the empire based on the set of drawings. The number of cloisters and buildings was to be exactly as had been foreseen. This summer, the construction was begun, and I shall personally take on the recruitment of craftsmen and coordination of materials. [Thus we] shall complete the project for which the late Sage [Emperor] had issued an imperial plaque, and [we] will eventually satisfy Daoyi's heart's desire. Furthermore, this monk's will and determination is no trifling matter. Some say that he, as a surrogate, was one in whom

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<sup>375</sup> Translation modified after Raffaello Orlando 1981.

<sup>376</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0834a.

Mañjuśrī implanted a superior cause. Now there are five official plaques for the monasteries on the summits of Mount Wutai. The Qingliang[si], Huayan[si], Foguang[si], and Yuhua[si] were finished first, the only one remaining incomplete is the Jin’ge[si]. As it is a scared commemorative [monastery], who would not regard [this project] with great reverence?

慕道義禪師所見之事。發心奉為國家依圖造金閣寺。院宇多少一如所見。今夏起手工匠什物茲自營辦。將滿先聖御額。終成道義感通。觀夫此僧志願非小。或謂文殊所假俾樹勝因。且五臺霧山寺額有五。清涼。華嚴。佛光。玉花。四寺先成。獨唯金閣一所未就。既是聖迹。誰不具瞻。<sup>377</sup>

Note that Amoghavajra claimed the petition was not merely an act of personal religious piety, rather, he was acting “upon imperial order” (奉為), and for the purpose of the entire “empire (國家)”. Therefore, as envisioned by Amoghavajra, the Golden Pavilion was similar in status and function as that of the aforementioned Mañjuśrī Pavilion. Based on other received sources, the Golden Pavilion was indeed publicized as an imperial project. For instance, in Ennin’s travelogue, he recorded that the statues housed inside the Golden Pavilion were also “built for the empire by the Tripiṭaka Master Amoghavajra (不空三藏為國所造)”.<sup>378</sup>

In the collections of imperial correspondences associated with Amoghavajra, “upon imperial order” was a frequently used phrase.<sup>379</sup> The format was in use during the

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<sup>377</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0834a

<sup>378</sup> Note the difference between “for the empire (為國)” versus “for the empire and upon imperial order (奉為國)”, with the latter talking from the first-person perspective. Although “feng (奉)” can also be understood as “respectfully follow”, or “follow with reverence”, in the context of “fengwei (奉為)”, it has been formalized to mean “follow [imperial decree] and carry out [with court approval]”. In contrast, private commissions often only use the formulaic language “reverently made...for ... (為...敬造...)”, without the “feng (奉)” character.

<sup>379</sup> For example, when describing the rituals for the memorial days of the past emperors, Amoghavajra wrote that “all monks of the [Chongfusi in Taiyuan] shall chant the *Sūtra of the Transcendent Wisdom for Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States* upon imperial order, for the [posthumous merits of] the Seven Sages, from Emperor Gaozu down to Suzong (令合寺僧奉為高祖至肅宗七聖轉仁王護國般若經)”. See



Sui dynasty to the latest,<sup>380</sup> and possibly already adopted by the Kingdom of Liang 梁 (502-557 CE) of the Southern Dynasties.<sup>381</sup> As it was adopted in the Buddhist context, the phrase signified the unification of the imperial cause and the Buddhist cause, and served as a powerful rhetoric during the reigns of pro-Buddhist emperors. Apart from petition memorials, it was most often used in votive inscriptions. For example, an eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara statue dated to Chang'an 3 (703 CE) from the Tower of the Seven Jewels 七寶台 commissioned under Empress Wu,<sup>382</sup> bears an inscription that reads:

The [*bhadanta*] monk translator Degan, Superintendent of the Tower of Seven Jewels, Abbot of Qingchansi, Duke of the Principality of Changping County, respectfully made a statue of the eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara for the empire upon imperial order. [He] humbly prays for the eternity of the August One's foundation and the long life span of the Sage [Empress Wu]".<sup>383</sup>

檢校造七寶台清禪寺主昌平縣開國公翻經僧德感。奉為國敬造十一面觀音像一區。伏願皇基永固。聖壽遐長。

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*Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120). A similar example is found in the "Testament" quoted above, where Amoghavajra instructed, "When the [Mañjuśrī] Pavilion is finished, twenty-one monks should be posted there upon imperial order (閣成已後奉為國家置三七僧)". There are many more examples in the *Collection of Memorials*.

<sup>380</sup> For Sui dynasty, for instance, the stele of Longhuasi 龍華寺 was inscribed with the title "respectfully made for Gaozu, the Empire Wen, upon imperial order 奉為高祖文皇帝敬造" (Zhang Zhenguo 1990, 70-71).

<sup>381</sup> For the State of Liang, the term was seen used in a slightly different context, in the votive chanting of its imperial repentance rituals. As the "Chanting Text 唱導文" composed for Emperor Jianwen 簡文帝, recorded in the *Expanded Collection on the Propagation and Clarification [of Buddhism]* 廣弘明集 (T52n2103, 0205a-0205b), "*fengwei*" and "*fengyuan* (奉願)" were repeatedly used to indicate the royal beneficiaries. A similar text "Repentance Ritual [decreed by] Emperor of the Liang 梁皇懺" was recorded in the *Catalogue of [the Artifacts, Text, etc., Acquired during] the Journey of the Japanese Monk Enchin to the Tang in Search of the Dharma* 日本比丘圓珍入唐求法目錄 (T55n2172), dated to Dazhong 12 (858 CE), see Hsu Li-chiang 1998, 177-206.

<sup>382</sup> For Empress Wu's religious activities at the Tower of the Seven Jewels, see Yen Chuan-ying 1986, and id. 1987, 41-88.

<sup>383</sup> Translation modified after Yen Chuan-ying 1986, 231.

In addition dedications to the empire, it could also be used with dedications to the imperial family. For instance, at the Longmen Grotto near the Eastern Capital Luoyang, many shrines and caves enjoyed patronage from the royal family, the aristocracy and court officials. One such inscription reads:

On the seventh day of the eleventh month of Xianheng 4 (673 CE) of the Great Tang, monk Huijian of Fahaisi in the Western Capital completed the meritorious accomplishment of reverently dedicating a Maitreya image shrine, with two Bodhisattvas and pairs of Heavenly Kings upon imperial order. [The shrine was made] for the August Emperor, the August Empress, the heir apparent, and the Prince of Zhou. I humbly pray for the imperial enterprise a flourishing of sageliness without limit and, for the heir apparent and all the princes, blessings extending for ten thousand generations.<sup>384</sup>

大唐咸亨四年十一月七日。西京海寺法僧惠簡。奉為皇帝。皇后。太子。周王。敬造彌勒像一龕。二菩薩神王等並德成就。伏願皇業聖花無窮。殿下諸王福延萬代。<sup>385</sup>

The “upon imperial order” format was continually used in designating court sponsorship and was continued well into the late Tang period. Among the treasures excavated from the relic repository of Famensi 法門寺, there was a Bodhisattva statue holding a gilt silver tray, with inscriptions that reads:

Upon imperial order, a Bodhisattva of True Body<sup>386</sup> was respectfully made for the wise, martial, virtuous, humane, divine and filial emperor to make internal offerings, humbly wishing the longevity of the Sage will enjoy ten thousand springs, the [lateral] branch of the Sage will bear ten thousand leaves [of descendants], the Eight Border Lands will all come in surrender, and the Four Seas will all be free from

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<sup>384</sup> Translations modified after Amy McNair 2007, 178.

<sup>385</sup> Transcription collected in Liu Jinglong and Li Yukun 1998.

<sup>386</sup> For discussions concerning the implication of “*zhenshen* (真身)” and related terms such as “*zhenrong* (真容)”, see Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 234-235, endnote 23. See also the section “Devotional Statue of a Buddhist Patron?” in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

disturbances.

Recorded on the imperial birthday of the Emperor [Xizong], the fourteenth day of the eleventh month, in the year of *xinmao*, Xiantong 12 (860 CE)

奉為睿文英武明德至仁大聖廣孝皇帝。敬造捧真身菩薩。永為供養。伏願聖壽萬春。聖枝萬葉。八荒來服。四海無波。咸通十二年辛卯歲十一月十四日皇帝延慶日記。

With the transmission of Buddhism as a state religion to Japan, a similar observation can be made about the usage of an “upon imperial order” slogan in Japanese texts since the mid-Heian period.<sup>387</sup>

Returning to the Golden Pavilion, although it was envisioned as an imperial project, its funding sources were essentially different from Mañjuśrī Pavilion of the Great Xingshansi:

[I.] Amoghavajra, wish to contribute alms to help Daohuan to complete this great undertaking. I only fear that I will not have enough time left in my life, and that the task upon which I have set my heart will evade me. Again, I make a nuisance of myself with my petitions, [in the hope that] Your Divine Grace will allow it. Since it is [a matter of] a sacred memorial for Mañjuśrī, a Sage must be its patron, and so who but Your Majesty could build the Golden Pavilion? A great edifice depends upon the main ridge and beam, just as the limbs [of a body] rely on the head. Together they

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<sup>387</sup> Yamamoto Shingo has pointed out that the opening format with “*feng* [...]” in votive inscriptions emerged during the mid-Heian period in Japan, but remained quite rare. Although Yamamoto did not explain why it was the case, it was clear from the extensive collection of votive inscriptions he provided, the few cases adopted this format are the kind of imperially decreed projects. For example, the format was seen in the “Votive Inscription for the Celebration of the Forth Birthday of the Eldest Princess upon the Imperial Order of [Empress Dowager Hanshi of] the Inner Palace 奉中宮[班子]令旨為第一公主賀四十齡願文”, and “Votive Inscription for the Offering of Assorted Medical Herbs to the Three Jewels and the Community of Monks upon the Imperial Order [of Emperor Uda] 奉[宇多天皇]敕雜藥供施三寶眾僧願文”. The same can be said by comparing the votive inscriptions written by Kūkai. For instance, in the “Votive Inscription for Dharma-assembly held for the One-year Imperial Memorial Service for the Grand Celestial Emperor [Seiwa], upon the imperial order of the Grand Empress Dowager [Akirakeiko] 奉太皇太后[明子]令旨, 奉為[清和]太上天皇御周忌[修]法會願文”, where “*feng*” was used twice, first time as the opening, and second time in the “*fengwei*” composition. See Yamamoto Shingo 1990, 7-16; id. 1991, 15-25; See also id. 2006, 805-922, esp. 810-825.

make one organic whole, which can bring order to the myriad nations. Herein lies the loftiness of the Golden Pavilion. If not for the approvals of ministers and support from militants, if without the joint patronage of the hundred officials and devotion from the thousand bureaucrats, in what other ways can favor from the majesty and his vassals be demonstrated, and in what other means can the grandeur of the Golden Pavilion be illuminated? The śramaṇa Hanguang of Baoshousi has received imperial commission to return to Mount Wutai to cultivate merit. I humbly pray to be of use in the construction of the monastery. With respect to the imperial wish that I am so sincerely attached, I beg to fulfill that to which I am so sincerely attached. I pray that the gods will shine their light, and thus to advance great merits to secure and to tranquillize the universe, and to protect and aid Your Sage Person. If Your Heavenly Grace allows it, please inform those concerned.<sup>388</sup>

不空願捨衣鉢隨助道環建立盛事。嘗恐歲不我與。愆于宿心。屢亦奏聞 天恩矜允。夫以文殊聖迹。聖者為主。結構金閣非陛下而誰。棟梁者大廈是依。股肱者元首所託。共成一體和叶萬邦。金閣斯崇。非夫宰輔贊成軍客匡助百寮咸續千官共崇。則何以表君臣之美。以光金閣之大也。保壽寺大德沙門含光奉使。迴臺恭修功德。伏望便於造寺所奉宣 聖旨祈所厥誠。庶霽神照明。以介景福康寧寰宇保佑 聖躬。如天恩允許請宣付所司。

As seen above, Amoghavajra ended his Petition hoping Emperor Daizong would be “benefactor (主, lit. owner)” of the Golden Pavilion by taking the leading role. Regardless, he also made it clear that prospective patrons of civil and military officials were already lined up behind him.

It has been pointed out that the four most powerful members of the central bureaucracy, Yuan Zai 元載 (d. 777 CE), Du Hongjian 杜鴻漸 (708-769 CE), Wang Jin 王縉 (700-782 CE) and Li Baoyu 李抱玉 (704-777 CE), rallied around Amoghavajra.<sup>389</sup>

Their signatures appeared in many of the Amoghavajra’s approved memorials, including

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<sup>388</sup> Translation modified after Raffaello Orlando 1981.

<sup>389</sup> See Geoffrey Goble 2012, 189-200, for discussion and biographies of the four aforementioned Managers of Affairs.

the Golden Pavilion petition:

Yuan Zai, Attendant Gentleman of the Secretariat, Jointly Manager of Affairs

中書侍郎平章事 元載

Du Hongjian, Vice Director of the Chancellery, Jointly Manager of Affairs

黃門侍郎平章事 杜鴻漸

Wang Jin, Vice Director of the Chancellery, Jointly Manager of Affairs

黃門侍郎平章事 王綰

Acting Commissioner of the Director of the Chancellery

檢校侍中使

Acting Commissioner of the Right Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs,

Jointly Manager of Affairs

檢校右僕射平章事使

Li Baoyu, Acting Left Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs, Jointly  
Manager of Affairs

檢校左僕射平章事 李抱玉

Commissioner of the Secretariat Director

中書令使

As seen above, all four held the title “Manager of Affairs 平章事”, an abbreviation of “Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery 中書門下平章事”, whose status was equal to that of “Grand Councilors 宰相”. Among them, especially Yuan, Du and Wang, were considered major patrons of Amoghavajra. They were even blamed by official historians for the imperial devotion to Buddhism, and Emperor Daizong was depicted as one who “followed their memorial excessively”.<sup>390</sup>

Following the Golden Pavilion petition, Amoghavajra soon submitted a similar request for Yuhuasi. A third memorial discussed here documented patronage to Amoghavajra in forms of corvée labor. In the “Petition for Releasing Skillful Craftsmen

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<sup>390</sup> *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f118, 12a.

from Official Requisition of Labor to Work for the Jin'gesi and Yuhuasi of the [Five]

Terrace Mount 請修臺山金閣玉華寺等巧匠放免追呼”, dated to Dali 2 (767 CE),

Amoghavajra wrote:

The Probationary Director of the State Ceremonies with honorific rank of Tejin, śramaṇa of Great Critical Wisdom and Vast Knowledge, Amoghavajra, makes the following petition:

Previously, with the imperial favor, Hanguang was sent as the Inspector for the building of the abovementioned Monasteries (i.e., Jin'gesi and Yuhuasi) and Common Offering Storehouses. The mountain site itself can provide the timber needed [for the construction]. However, because it is [a commemorative project] for sacred traces, only skillful craftsmen should be employed for the work. The listed craftsmen were recommended by [people] from near and afar. [They] are now at the mountain site engaged in building activities, but [they are] afraid that the prefectures or counties [they are] registered with would call them back [for official requisitions]. [I] wish Your Divine Grace will make an exception to allow them to complete the meritorious and virtuous deeds.

右特進試鴻臚卿三藏沙門大廣智不空奏。先奉恩命。令含光檢校造前件寺及普通供養處。其所須材木當山自有。既是靈跡。事資巧匠。前件匠等並遠近所推。今見在山修造次第。恐所營州縣或有追呼。特望 天恩許畢功德。<sup>391</sup>

As seen in the Mañjuśrī Pavilion project, two thirds of the building costs went towards purchasing raw materials, and half of the money (one third of the total cost) paid for various kinds of timber. By exercising administrative powers that allowed harvesting wood at Mount Wutai, Amoghavajra already economized on the majority of the spending. In addition, manual costs that made up the remaining one third of the building costs was also significantly reduced thanks to the appropriation of corvée labor.

The “skillful craftsmen (巧匠)” recruited into Amoghavajra’s building projects

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<sup>391</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0835b.

include:

Construction Material Manager Monks for building the Sacred Jin'gesi on Mount Wutai, Dai Prefecture: Chuntuo, Daoxian, Fada; Carpenters: Qi Can, Gu Li, Jian Yiqin (from Dingxiang county, Qi prefecture), Tan Minghui (from Wutai county), Wu Maolin, Yang Xizi (from Tanglin county), Yong Rixin;  
Construction Material Managers for building the Sacred Yuhuasi: Yin (from Yanmen county);  
Carpenters: Huo Long (from Fanshi county), Jian Ruyan, Guo Zhe (from Tanglin county), Han Qing, Jia Li, Zhieba (from Tanglin county), Zhang Hui (from Fanshi county);  
Carpenters in charge of six Common Offering Storehouses at Mount Wutai: Ding Xiuling (from Dingxiang county), Ban Bin, Zhi Yican, Guo Gui, Ma Yuan, Li Sishi, Feng Duer (from Wutai county), Ma Yuanzhe;  
代州五臺山聖金閣寺造寺都料僧。純陀。道仙。法達。木匠。侯璨。谷禮。釗遺欽。忻州定襄縣。檀命暉。五臺縣。五茂林。陽喜子。唐林縣。雍日新。  
聖玉花寺造寺都料。殷。雁門縣。木匠。霍龍。繁峙縣。釗如晏。郭慙。唐林縣。韓清。賈禮。支阿八。唐林縣。張暉。繁峙縣。  
修五臺山六處普通供養舍木匠。丁修零。定襄縣。斑賓。智義璨。郭珪。馬元。李四師。封杜兒。五臺縣。馬元慙。<sup>392</sup>

As an imperially-endorsed design made by persons with direct knowledge of official architecture, the Golden Pavilion probably bore many traits of most lavish styles around the capital area. Nevertheless, since the craftsmen were mostly from nearby Wutai, Dingxiang, Tanglin, Yanmen and Fanshi counties, the structural details and manufacturing process of the building were probably largely determined by the workers.<sup>393</sup>

While Amoghavajra had mentioned his concern that he would not live to see the

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<sup>392</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0835a.

<sup>393</sup> This combination of imperial style and local technique is by no means a unique phenomenon, which I discuss in more detail in section “Structural and Decorative Scheme of the Buddha Hall” of Chapter 4 using the extant example of a Tang period Buddha Hall of Foguangsi.

completion of the Golden Pavilion, it appears that when he passed away, the project was still ongoing. Hanguang 含光, Amoghavajra's disciple, served as the head abbot of the Golden Pavilion, under whose tenure the monastery came to be called the "Monastery of Granting Retributions and Protecting the Nation with the Golden Pavilion of the Great Sage 大聖金閣保應鎮國寺". In Dali 12 (777 CE), three years after Amoghavajra's death, a special "Commissioner of Merit and Virtue of Mount Wutai 修五臺山功德使" position was created for the emperor's birthday and entrusted to Amoghavajra's disciple, Huixiao 惠曉 from Ximingsi 西明寺. The position set a new precedent in addition to the Commissioners who worked with the Palace and in the Capital City.

The significance of commissioners was also displayed in a memorial submitted by Huilang 惠朗, one of Amoghavajra's preeminent disciples, he requested that the throne be appointed to another person to fill the office after Li Yuancong passed away:

Prostrating [myself] on the ground, at the foot of the Treasurable Resonant, Ultimate Sagacious, and Cultured Military Emperor, [...] dare I say, since the Empire made a special effort to establish the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue in the Capital City, the prosperities of the populace increased steadily, whereas the viciousness of the mob decreased regularly. The imperial family supported the protections by the magnificent and marvelous, while the monastic community quenched the fears from defeats and humiliations. Only Your Divine Grace is aware of this, but the ordinary people seldom realize it. Not long ago, [Li] Yuancong passed away, and the monks of the Imperial Capital were left in sadness and depression. [...] Prostrating [myself] on the ground, [I] beg the Sagacious and Benevolent Emperor to choose a compassionate official to fill the office of [Commissioner of] Merit and Virtue, [in order] to renew the enduring benefits of the Empire, and to ease the monks' grieving of their loss.

伏惟 寶應元聖文武皇帝陛下。[...] 豈惟京城自國家特置功德使已來。眾福日滋。群凶時滅。皇室起崇高之祐。緇門絕挫辱之虞。惟天所知。人罕悟矣。一昨元



琮薨沒。帝京僧侶相視黯然。[...] 伏乞聖慈擇一賢臣職司功德。永國家惟新之福。解僧人懷舊之悲。<sup>394</sup>

In Dali 13 (778 CE), Liu Chongxun 劉崇訓, who succeeded Li Yuancong as Commissioner of Merit and Virtue of the Capital City, was also serving as his successor in the Commandant of Right Army of Militant Dragons position. In view of that, the reign of Emperor Daizong saw two prominent generals of the eunuch-controlled branch of imperial armies and an additional eunuch official supporting imperial construction and maintenance of Buddhist deeds. When Emperor Dezong reinstalled the commissioners and made it a regular position, we see a similar pattern playing out for the candidates they put in office—a point I will explore further in the following section.

#### **MERITS FOR EUNUCHS**

The death of Emperor Daizong brought the activities of his commissioners to a halt. Within a decade, however, his successor Emperor Dezong reinvented the commissioner system as three regular posts, the “Commissioners of Merit and Virtue of the Left and Right Avenues 左右街功德使” in charge of the main imperial capital, and an extra envoy position was created as the “Commissioner of Merit and Virtue for the Eastern Capital 東都功德使” in Zhenyuan 4 (788 CE). These posts routinely held by eunuch-generals who were serving as the “Left and Right Palace Commandant-protectors 左右護軍中尉 (abbr. Commandants 中尉)” of the Army of Divine Strategy. As Stanley Weinstein has put it, “with a single imperial decree, the enormous religious establishments in China consisting

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<sup>394</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0853b.

of several hundred thousand monks and nuns was detached from the traditional bureaucratic apparatus and transferred to an office that was solely in the hands of eunuch-generals”.<sup>395</sup> Emperor Wuzong attempted the suppression and mass confiscation of Buddhist property in Huichang 5 (845 CE), but it only lasted a year. From that point on, no emperor questioned the place of Buddhism within the Tang state, and the powers of the Commissioners of Merit and Virtue lasted until the fall of the empire.<sup>396</sup>

Granted, the profits that eunuch officials drew from commissions through forced monastery repairs and purchase of live birds and animals for release could be enormous. However, eunuchs’ attraction to Buddhism was not just as a means for profit. A study by Liu Shu-fen draws out attention to a group of karmic retribution stories about eunuchs that appeared in various sources including the *Continued Biographies*, the *Ancient Record* and the *Avatamsaka Biographies*, where different records differ slightly in detail, but the main plot points remain consistent.<sup>397</sup> The version included in the *Sympathetic Response to the Great Corrective and Expansive Sūtra of the Buddha’s Avatamsaka* 大方廣佛華嚴經感應傳, for example is quoted here *in extenso*:

Once there was a eunuch named Liu Qianzhi, who was an attendant of the third prince of the Northern Qi. During the Taihe era of the Northern Qi, the prince self-immolated, making an offering to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Qianzhi was ashamed of what was left [of his body after castration], and set up [his] mind to go into the mountain. [He] mainly practiced the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. [The eunuch] expounded and upheld the teachings day and night, honored [the Buddha] and

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<sup>395</sup> Stanley Weinstein 1987.

<sup>396</sup> Tsukamoto Zenryū 1933, 368-406.

<sup>397</sup> See Liu Shu-fen 2008

repented [his sins] around the clock. Years passed, [but he] remained determined and his efforts were relentless, and [he] finally received the caring response from Mañjuśrī. Suddenly [his] handsome beard started regrowing, and [he] fully regained [his] male member. [His] voice was incomparably pleasant. Since [his] beard and [male] demeanor had recovered, [he] diligently studied the essence of the [Avataṃsaka] Sūtra in the Mizhi Cave, and compiled six hundred fascicles of *Exegeses on the Avataṃsaka [Sūtra]*.

時有閹人劉謙之。北齊第三王子之從者也。齊太和年中。王子燒身。以供養文殊菩薩。謙之薄殘缺。乃發心住五臺山。專業華嚴。晝夜受持。六時禮懺。頻歷歲時。精懇匪懈。乃感文殊加護。忽然鬚鬢自生。根體具備。聲韻雅朗。人歎及之。既復形鬚。單懇彌志洞曉經旨。乃製華嚴論六百卷。<sup>398</sup>

Not unlike the founding myths of monasteries at Mount Wutai, although the eunuch is said to be from the Northern Qi, however, the earliest record of the story can only be traced to the early Tang dynasty.

Several points can be observed in this group of karmic retribution stories. First and foremost, as Liu Shu-fen as pointed out, a prototype of this story could be found in the *Continued Biographies* and the *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma* 法苑珠林, both reference the *Record of Strange Manifestations* 旌異記, a Sui dynasty text that is no longer extant, as their source.<sup>399</sup>

In the early years of Taihe era (477-499 CE), a eunuch official from the Dai Capital (a.k.a., Pingcheng)<sup>400</sup> grieved what was left [of his body] after castration could not qualify [him] as a member of the human realm. [Therefore, he] sent a memorial begging permission to go into the mountain and practice the dharma. An imperial

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<sup>398</sup> T51n2074, 0177c. For parallel versions of this story, see the *Continued Biographies* (T50n2060), 0665a-0665b, the *Ancient Record* (T51n2098), 1092c, and the *Avataṃsaka Biographies* (T51n2073), 0156c.

<sup>399</sup> Liu Shu-fen 2008.

<sup>400</sup> The Sate of Dai 代 of the Sixteen Kingdoms was the precursor to the Northern Wei dynasty, its name originated from the Dai Commandery 代郡 of the Qin dynasty. While the Northern Wei established its capital city in Pingcheng 平城 (located near present-day Datong), the city also served as the administrative center of its Dai Commandery, therefore also known as Daijing 代京 (lit. Dai Capital).

edict granted [his request]. Thereupon, [he] bought a set of the *Avataṃsaka* [*Sūtra*], reciting and repenting day and night without rest. [He] went into the mountain at the beginning of summer, and by the end of the sixth month, [his] handsome beard had completely regrown, and [he] regained the appearance of a man. [He] sent another memorial and reported [what happened to the throne]. Emperor Gaozu (i.e., Emperor Xiaowen, r. 471-499 CE), who was already a devout believer, was immediately surprised, and [his faith] grew stronger than ever. Consequently, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* rose to great popularity in the Great Kingdom of Dai (i.e., Northern Wei). 太和初年。代京闔官自慨刑餘。不逮人族。奏乞入山修道。有敕許之。乃齋一部花嚴。晝夜讀誦。禮悔不息。夏首歸山。至六月末。髭鬢盡生。復丈夫相。還狀奏聞。高祖信敬由來。忽見驚訝。更增常日。於是大代之國花嚴一經因斯轉盛。<sup>401</sup>

Accordingly, the original story took place in the Taihe 太和 era of Northern Wei. It did not give any biographic information about the eunuch official, and the plot was not yet associated with the self-immolation of a certain prince. On the other hand, while the group of derived stories discussed earlier was also dated to the “Taihe era”, Northern Qi had never used the reign name Taihe. No record of Northern Qi princes could fit in this legend, nor was information of a certain eunuch official Liu Qianzhi found in official histories either.

Additionally, it is worth noting that while the original story took place in Mount Rentou 人頭山, said to be a part of the sacred mountain range of Tai 泰岳, when the other group of stories appeared in the early Tang, their setting was changed to Mount Wutai. The appropriation of the karmic retribution stories intended as a part of the promotion of Mount Wutai was further supported by a paragraph about Huize’s visits, appended to the earliest appearance of the story found in the *Continued Biographies*:

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<sup>401</sup> *Continued Biographies* (T50n2060), 0686b. For a parallel version of this story, see *Forest of Gems* (T53n2122), 0910a.

Recently, during the Longshuo era, the Master (i.e., Emperor) ordered monk Huize from Huichangsi to visit there on two occasions, carrying offerings of merits and virtue to repair the solemn appearance of the Pagoda [of the Self-immolated Prince]. 近龍朔中。主人令會昌寺僧會蹟。兩度將功德物往彼。修補塔尊儀。與五臺縣官同往。備見聖跡。異香鐘聲。相續不絕。<sup>402</sup>

The purported efficacy of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* was conveniently maintained, since it was consistent with Empress Wu's agenda to prop up the text and associate it with the Wutai Mountains.

The choice of a eunuch official as the main character of the story, however, invites further explanations. For one thing, it was obvious that since the eunuchs had been important Buddhist patrons during the Tang dynasty, they were the intended as the target readers of the stories. As seen in the contributions made by the eunuch commissioner system, these advertisements must have been extremely successful. In fact, as early as under Empress Wu, eunuchs were already seen engaged in Buddhist activities at Mount Wutai with great enthusiasm. For example, according to the *Ancient Record*, among the fellow pilgrims Empress Wu dispatched to Mount Wutai with Huize, only the name of Zhang Xinghong, a Eunuch Fan-bearer and Palace Attendant, was highlighted.<sup>403</sup> For another, the genius of the stories lies in the particularity of eunuch patrons. It seems that according to the Buddhist perspective, a lack of the male organ, which was generally the fate of every eunuch,<sup>404</sup> was regarded as retribution for sinful karma. For example, the

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<sup>402</sup> T52n2106, 0425a.

<sup>403</sup> *Ancient Record* (T51n2098), 1098b-1098c.

<sup>404</sup> Castration in ancient China meant the severing of the penis in addition to the testicles of the male (for methods of castration, see Mitamura Taisuke 1970, 28-35, and Maria H. Dettenhofer 2009, 84-89). Before the Sui-Tang Dynasties period, castration was mainly a traditional punishment, one of the "Five

*Sūtra on the Retribution of Sinful Karma to Convert Those in Hell Pronounced by the Buddha* 佛說罪業應報教化地獄經 specifically stated that:

[...] Then there are people who do not have male genitalia, who have the body of eunuchs, and thus cannot take wives. Why is that? The Buddha says: “Because in their former lives, they were fond of castrating elephants, horses, bulls, goats and dogs, and the number [of their castrated animals] is numerous. These have caused great pain to sentient beings and are no longer bearable. Thus when they are reborn, they receive such convictions.”

[...] 復有眾生。男根不具為黃門身。不得妻娶。何罪所致。佛言。以前世時坐喜犍象馬牛羊猪狗不可稱數。令此眾生苦痛難忍。死而復穌。故獲斯罪。<sup>405</sup>

Also supported by Buddhist literature is the emphasis of a “wholesome body”, as best exemplified by the story of the Dragon King’s daughter in the *Lotus Sūtra*:

At that time Śāriputra said to the dragon girl: “You suppose that in this short time you

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Punishments” that could be legally inflicted on criminals. It was called “palace punishment (宮刑)”, since men castrated would be commonly enslaved to work in the harem of the palace, although there were exceptions, such as the instances where men sentenced to castration were turned into eunuch slaves for forced labor. Castration is also said to be implemented as replacement for more severe punishments such as execution (Mitamura Taisuke 1970, 56-58), but there isn’t enough contemporary documents to support this opinion (Paul R. Goldin 2002, 77). A General abolition of castration was said to have attempted by the first emperor of Sui dynasty in Kaihuang 1 (581 CE). However, this decree by no means put an end to the employment of eunuchs; on the contrary, the increasing luxury of the Sui court demanded for even more eunuchs than ever. As castration was considered an indignity to which no male of Chinese birth should be submitted, raiding expeditions were organized to capture young boys from aboriginal tribes, especially those of the south and southeast. The situation remained similar during the Tang dynasty. The majority of Chinese eunuchs were not religiously castrated. Nor did they become eunuchs on voluntary basis (Yu Huaqing 1993, 10). Slave raids continued and it soon became the custom for provincial officials (especially in the South) to send to the capital city a quota of castrated boys as part of their annual tribute. As noted by several writers in the Tang dynasty, most of the eunuchs at court were children of families from the frontier regions, descended from non-Chinese peoples. In addition, as noted by a merchant Soleyman while travelling in China at this time, among the eunuchs “there are those who have been captured from foreign regions, which were made later eunuchs; there are others who were born [by immigrants] in China, captured by the sovereign for illegal conduct, whose parents themselves are useless for offering.” Slave markets targeted to private households also flourished despite of the court’s effort to limit or end the slave traffic (J. K. Rideout 1949, 54-55. See also Mitamura Taisuke 1970, 58-60).

<sup>405</sup> T17n724, 0451c. See also the *Sūtra of the Causes and Effects of Actions* in Sogdian, “the one who castrates living beings has incomplete pudenda” (D. N. MacKenzie 1970).

have been able to attain the unsurpassed way, but this is difficult to believe. Why? Because a woman's body is soiled and defiled, not a vessel for the Dharma. How could you attain the unsurpassed *bodhi*? The road to Buddhahood is long and far-reaching. Only after one has spent immeasurable *kalpas* pursuing austerities, accumulating deeds, practicing all kinds of *paramitas*, can one finally achieve success. Moreover, a woman is subject to the five obstacles. [...] How then could a woman like you be able to attain Buddhahood so quickly?"

[...] The girl said: "Employ your supernatural powers and watch me attain Buddhahood. It shall be even quicker than that!" At that time the members of the assembly all saw the dragon girl in the space of an instant change into a man and carry out all the practices of a bodhisattva, immediately preceding to the Spotless World of the south, taking a seat on a jeweled lotus, and attaining impartial and correct enlightenment.

時舍利弗語龍女言。汝謂不久得無上道。是事難信。所以者何。女身垢穢非是法器。云何能得無上菩提。佛道懸曠經無量劫。勤苦積行具修諸度。然後乃成。又女人身猶有五障。[...] 云何女身速得成佛。

[...] 女言。以汝神力觀我成佛。復速於此。當時眾會皆見龍女。忽然之間變成男子。具菩薩行。即往南方無垢世界。坐寶蓮華成等正覺。<sup>406</sup>

It was evident that the notion of the integrity of the body, and the corporeal compensation that results from this indemnification, is of critical importance to a Buddhist. Similar to the obstacles between female Buddhists and the path to enlightenment, eunuch devotees would also find themselves lacking "a vessel for the dharma", or the wholesome male body, to achieve enlightenment.

However, much like the story of the dragon girl that gave hope to female devotees, karmic retribution stories concerning eunuchs gave hope to them to overcome their deficiencies instantly. In addition to the Liu Qianzhi story, an earlier story was found in the *Great Commentary on the Abhidharma* 阿毗達磨大毗婆沙論 (Skt. *Abhidharma*

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<sup>406</sup> T09n0262, 0035c.

*Mahāvibhāṣā Śāstra*), translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 during the early Xianqing 顯慶 era (656-659 CE).<sup>407</sup> It recounted the story of a eunuch who, seeing a herd of five hundred bulls taken to be castrated, thought to himself, “although I have a human body, because of my evil past karma, I am unable to function as a man. I should truly use my wealth to save these animals from a similar destiny”. Therefore, he bought the animals and freed them. Sure enough, “as a result of his good karma, the eunuch’s male functions were restored”.<sup>408</sup> The story reminds readers of the comments Buddha made on eunuchs, that the ones who have castrated living beings in former lives will have incomplete pudenda. In this case, when merit is generated by saving living beings from castration, the devotee was able to receive an immediate retributational reward by regaining complete pudenda. In other words, the retribution was not adding to an invisible, abstract karma capital. Rather, it took effect in a very practical and corporeal way.<sup>409</sup> Similar to the emergence of the Liu Qianzhi story, this eunuch story was not found in the older versions and was likely a new addition dated to

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<sup>407</sup> T27n1545.

<sup>408</sup> Included in “On Repaying Favor 報恩篇”, in the *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma* 法苑珠林 (T53n2122), 0665a. A similar story is found in Japanese sources, “Karmic Retribution in the Three Stages of Time 三時業”, in the *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* 正法眼藏.

<sup>409</sup> This story stays within the frame of a typical Buddhist miraculous story. Buddhist doctrine teaches that every human action takes place in a sequence of the moral law of cause and effect (報應, or 業, Skt. *karma*) and each individual’s existence is conditioned by the idea of transmigration (輪迴, Skt. *samsara*), concepts that were probably adopted from pre-Buddhist notions. A clear understanding of karma was evidenced as early as the fourth century, when the *Treatise on the Three Ways of Karmic Retribution* 三報論 was written by Huiyuan 慧遠, who drew his theory from the *Compendium of Abhidharma* (Skt. *Abhidharmasāra*). The three ways refer to retributions in the same lifetime, in the next lifetime, and in hundredth or thousandth lifetime. This teaching has proven to be very appealing to Chinese culture, since it has some points of contact with the Chinese tradition through the universality of the moral law of cause and effect.



the early Tang.<sup>410</sup>

Different narratives of the Liu Qianzhi stories all put emphasis on the vocalization of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, and through this vocal production, the eunuch devotee receives the deity's response by regaining his male organ together with other desirable features. Different from the more straightforward karmic retribution stories, these kind of narratives highlighted the mystical union between the practitioner and the Buddha in relation to oratorical activities and the doctrine of “sympathetic response (感應)”, that is, a desired state of resonance between a believer and the divine being,<sup>411</sup> characteristic of other miraculous stories of Mount Wutai.

#### THE BUDDHIST PERSECUTION, REVIVAL, AND ANOTHER TANG PRINCE OF LIGHT

As discussed above, the Buddhist church flourished under the reign of Emperor Daizong. With the help of eunuch commissioners, the patronage of government officials and military commanders as well as empresses and princes of the imperial family, Amoghavajra revitalized the cult of Mañjuśrī and strengthened Mount Wutai's status as a

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<sup>410</sup> Although the *Great Commentary on the Abhidharma* had already been introduced by translation before the Tang dynasty, it did not include aforementioned eunuch episode. An old version of this commentary was translated by the Indian śrāmaṇa Buddhavarman 浮陀跋摩 and others under the title “*Great Commentary on the Abhidharma* 阿毗曇毗婆沙論” (T28n1546). In Liu Shu-fen's discussion, she mistakenly referred to an irrelevant source, *The Commentary on the Ten Stages Sūtra* 十住毗婆沙論 (T27n1545) translated by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 as an older version of Xuanzang's translation. However, her observation still applies that the old version of *Great Commentary* did not include this story. See Liu Shu-fen 2008, 52. Note that this inconsistency may be explained by the theory held by Nishi Giyū and Masuda Yoshio, that these two translations were based on texts transmitted from different traditions. While Xuanzang's text was from the orthodox tradition of Kaśmīra 迦濕彌羅, Buddhavarman's text was not (Nishi Giyū 1975, 100-105, and Masuda Yoshio 1987a, 4).

<sup>411</sup> Charlotte Eubanks 2012, 50.

sacred Buddhist site. We may recall the popular legend from Empress Wu's time that spoke of the Indian monk Buddhapālita, who was remembered for bringing to China the *Sūtra of the Buddha's Supreme Uṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī*. As the story found its echo decades later, the status of China and India was completely reversed in the narrative. According to Hanguang, when he was traveling in India with his master Amoghavajra, foreign Buddhists inquired him about Chinese Buddhist scriptures and expressed their wish to have them translated into Sanskrit.<sup>412</sup>

Writing during the subsequent reign of Emperor Dezong, Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839 CE), who was known as the “Master Commentator of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 華嚴疏主” and the “State Master Qingliang 清涼國師”, a resident monk at the Great Avataṃsaka Monastery at Mount Wutai, shared a similar sentiment his *Commentary to the Great Corrective and Expansive Sūtra of the Buddha's Avataṃsaka* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏 (compiled bet. 784-787 CE).<sup>413</sup> He exclaimed that “since the Great Teacher abstracted

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<sup>412</sup> The story was recorded by Zhanran 湛然 (711-782 CE) in the *Notes on Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra* 法華文句記 (T34n1719), 0359c-0360a. When paying a visit to Mount Wutai, Zhanran ran into Hanguang, who was overseeing an imperial temple construction project there. Hanguang told Zhanran that, while traveling in India with Amoghavajra, he met a monk who asked, “[I heard that] the teachings of Tiantai 天台 School are circulating in the Great Tang. They are best at distinguishing the heretic from the orthodox, showing [the difference between] the one-sided and the perfect. Could you have the Tiantai works translated into Sanskrit and bring the translation to this country?” After finishing this recount, Zhanran made the comment that, “isn't this like what is said in the story that the law, which had been lost to the Central State (中國), had to be sought in the surrounding states? However, few in this country are able to recognize [the value of the Tiantai teachings], just like the people of Lu [who failed to do justice to their rites].” See Chen Jinhua 1999, 26 and Tansen Sen 2003, 83-85.

<sup>413</sup> It took four years for Chengguan to complete his commentary, starting in Xingyuan 興元 1 (784 CE) and finishing in Zhenyuan 貞元 3 (787 CE). The commentary originally contains twenty fascicles. The collection was then expanded by his disciples led by Sengrui 僧睿 around Zhenyuan 12 (796 CE) with their ten fascicles of “sub-commentaries (演義)”, and rebranded as the received *Exegesis on the Commentary to the Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔.

himself from the Western land of Tian[zhu] (i.e. India), his spectacular virtues broadened and heightened in the Eastern land of [Hua]xia (i.e. China). His dharma-body (法身, Skt. *dharmakāya*) will last to eternity, nonetheless, the Cock[’s Foot] Mountain was deserted to wild plants. [To date] His manifestations are found in proper places [i.e. in Mount Wutai], [therefore,] the Vulture Peak [at Mount Wutai] earned its name after that land [of India].” This complete turn of events bore out Raoul Birnbaum and others’ observation that Mañjuśrī’s association with Mount Wutai transformed China from a distant borderland into a place blessed with the presence of this great Bodhisattva and the recipient of his genuine Dharma.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>414</sup> Raoul Birnbaum 1983, 12. See also, Antonino Forte 1985, 106-134; Tansen Sen 2003, 76-86.

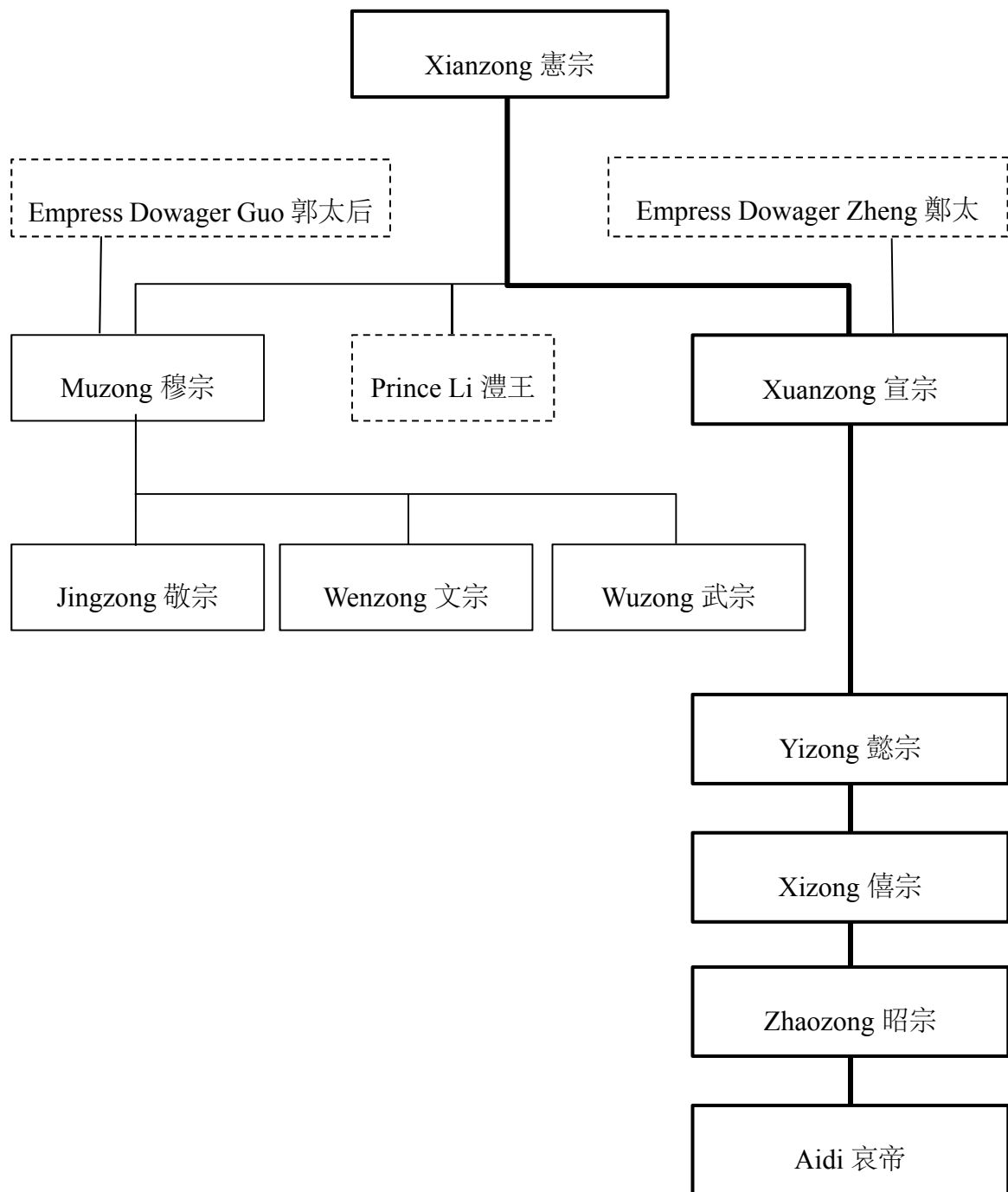


Chart 1. Imperial Lineage from Emperors Xianzong through Aidi of the Late Tang Period

With the rising impact of the Buddhist church and its threat to the state economy, a severe persecution was finally launched by the pro-Daoist Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840-846 CE) during the Huichang era. However, the event was no longer viewed as a watershed, for the suffering of the Buddhism under Emperor Wuzong did not directly translate to its perpetual decline. As soon as Emperor Wuzong died in Huichang 5 (846 CE), the succeeding Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 847-860 CE) sponsored large-scale revitalization programs that reestablished and strengthened the dominance of Buddhism. He was the son of Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 806-820 CE), the younger brother of the following Emperor Muzong 穆宗 (r. 821-824 CE) and an uncle of another three emperors before him, Emperor Jingzong 敬宗 (r. 824-827 CE), Emperor Wenzong 文宗 (r. 827-840 CE), and Emperor Wuzong (Chart 1). Emperor Xuanzong has been depicted as a pro-Buddhist ruler and eulogized for his pious policies, however, it was not until very recently that a deeper understanding of his involvement in these Buddhist affairs became possible, owing to Huang Lou's groundbreaking monograph.<sup>415</sup>

Through the light shed by epigraphs from newly excavated tombs, Huang Lou has persuasively illustrated the long-overlooked conspiracy behind Emperor Xuanzong's enthronement. In contrast to official histories, which brushed over the reason for him taking office as "the sons of Emperor Wuzong were still young", Emperor Xuanzong most likely worked in collusion with powerful eunuchs, the Hanlin Academicians 翰林學士, a

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<sup>415</sup> Huang Lou 2012, 1-11. The scope of Huang's book is very extensive, and I am only able to introduce very briefly the part that is relevant to the present discussion.

concubine of Emperor Wu's, and notably his mother, the future Empress Dowager Zheng 鄭太后, in order to seize the throne.<sup>416</sup> As soon as he became emperor, Emperor Xuanzong manipulated official histories and framed the lineage of Emperor Muzong as murders of his father. He carried out an eight-year-long purge against the accused "usurpers of the Yuanhe era (元和逆黨)", coupled with a clampdown of the political faction associated with his brother and nephews that reigned before him, in order to cement his own rule.

The idolization of Emperor Xianzong including his role as a Buddhist patron, together with the revolution against Emperor Wuzong's anti-Buddhist policies should be regarded as part of Emperor Xuanzong's legitimization efforts.<sup>417</sup> The emperor's relationship with Buddhism was ultimately mythologized, in particular by stories about his self-exile as a monk in order to evade the bloody battles of succession. Although these kinds of stories were only seen in unofficial histories and Buddhist literature and were proven as fictitious,<sup>418</sup> they were nonetheless encouraged by his far-reaching promotion of Buddhist ideology and his profound reliance on the Buddhist community for political purposes.

Accompanying this period of political instabilities, the spread of propaganda materials and the manipulation of historical records reached historical height. For example, the war of words was deployed in renaming the first bunch of monasteries and nunneries

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<sup>416</sup> Huang Lou 2012, 15-44.

<sup>417</sup> Huang Lou 2012, 60-65. There were of course other concerns behind Emperor Xuanzong's policies. See discussion and further references on *ibid.*, 62, footnote 2. For a summarization of Emperor Xuanzong's pro-Buddhist policies, see Stanley Weinstein 1987, 136-144.

<sup>418</sup> Huang Lou 2012, 249-279.

restored by Emperor Xuanzong. New names such as Monastery for Protecting the Empire 護國寺, Nunnery for the Prosperity of the Tang 唐昌寺, Monastery for the Prolongation of the Tang 保唐寺, and so forth, all were aimed to eulogize Emperor Xuanzong's purported achievements in rectifying disorders and reinstating prosperity.<sup>419</sup> His rule was also important in the history of Mount Wutai and that of the Foguangsi in particular. In addition to reconstructions of the monasteries destroyed during the Huichang era, Emperor Xuanzong decreed five monasteries and nunneries to be reestablished at Mount Wutai in Dazhong 4 (848 CE), which undoubtedly included the Foguangsi.<sup>420</sup>

It is therefore interesting to bring an important aspect of Emperor Xuanzong's self-fashioning into perspective, namely his association with miraculous lights, which allegedly led to his entitlement as the "Prince of Guang 光王 (lit. Prince of Light)":

The emperor appeared to be dim on the outside but was bright on the inside. [He was] solemn and quiet, and had an exceptionally unusual look in his eyes. When he was still a young boy, [people of the] Inner Palace believed he was mentally disabled. When ten-or-so years old, [he] suffered from severe illness and was enfeebled for a long time. Suddenly, splendid light lit up [his] body. [He] immediately rose up in high spirits, stood upright, and bowed down, as if facing officials at court. The wet nurse thought [he has] a mental disorder. Emperor Muzong, upon seeing [him], patted [him] on his back and said: "That's the prodigy of my family. [He is] not out of his mind."

帝外晦而內朗。嚴重寡言。視瞻特異。幼時宮中以為不慧。十餘歲時。遇重疾沈綴。忽有光輝燭身。蹶然而興。正身拱揖。如對臣僚。乳媪以為心疾。穆宗

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<sup>419</sup> After Emperor Wuzong's death, Emperor Xuanzong ordered the restoration of the first bunch of monasteries and nunneries. Sixteen was chosen in the sixth year of the Huichang era. Aside from four that retained their original name, such as the Monastery for the Rise of the Tang 興唐寺 and the Monastery for Preserving Longevity 保壽寺, the remaining twelve were renamed. See *Collected Documents of Tang* (S81), f48, 17b-18a. See also: Huang Lou 2012, 62; Stanley Weinstein 1987, 138.

<sup>420</sup> *Collected Documents of Tang* (S81), f48, 18b.

視之。扶其背曰。此吾家英物。非心慙也。<sup>421</sup>

Like many other legends surrounding Emperor Xuanzong, this was also fabricated to legitimate his rule. As Huang Lou has argued, such a private experience could only be fabricated by his mother, the Empress Dowager Zheng, who had her own agendas in the series of political storms leading to her son's enthronement. Not coincidentally, her brother Zheng Guang 鄭光 also reported having dreams of the Prince of Guang "riding a chariot together with the sun and the moon, emanating rays of light that brightened the entire universe".<sup>422</sup>

#### DONORS OF THE BUDDHA HALL

In order to analyze the historical events behind the construction of the Great Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, it is first necessary to bring our knowledge of its donors up to date. The majority of previous scholarship has followed Liang Ssu-ch'eng's proposal in his 1944-45 field report, which were no longer accurate. Liang and his team discovered four inscriptions written on the bottom of the "four-rafter beams (四椽栿)"<sup>423</sup> of the Buddha Hall. (Figure 5) One of the inscriptions, identified the names of the "Benefactor of Merit and Virtue (功德主)" and the "Benefactor of the Buddha Hall (佛殿主)": (Figure 5-I)

Benefactor of Merit and Virtue, the late Commandant of the Right Army [of Divine

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<sup>421</sup> *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f18-2, 1b. Huang Lou suggested it is a revised version based on Xue E 薛鶚's *Miscellaneous Notes of Du Yang* 杜陽雜編 (Huang Lou 2012, 29-31).

<sup>422</sup> *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f52, 19b.

<sup>423</sup> A beam of certain rafters is a way of identifying its length used in the *Building Standards*. For instance, a "four-rafter beam" is a beam that spans across the length of four rafters, and in the case of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi, four-rafter beams are the longest exposed beam structure, used on the part of roof structure above the Buddhist altar.



Strategy], Wang  
功德主故右軍中尉王

Benefactor of the Buddha Hall, Offering Deliverance [Commissioner] from the  
Superior Capital, female devotee, Ning Gongyu  
佛殿主上都送供女弟子甯公遇

Meanwhile, a corresponding inscription was found on the sūtra-pillar located in front of the hall, dated to Dazhong 大中 11 (857 CE), in which the name of Ning Gongyu appeared again, this time simply as the “female devotee and Benefactor of the Buddha Hall”.

Assuming these two inscriptions were contemporaneous, Liang was able to narrow down the possible identities of the Benefactor Wang, and suggested him to be the eunuch-general Wang Shoucheng 王守澄 (d. 835 CE).<sup>424</sup> Liang further argued that since the name of the benefactor Ning Gongyu was listed on the same beam as Wang, there might have been deep connections between them. Liang poised two possibilities, suggesting that Ning was either a “wife” or an adopted daughter of the eunuch-general Wang, and the intention of her meritorious work was to commemorate her late husband or father.<sup>425</sup> I will explain in detail that Liang’s identification of the eunuch-general “Wang” was incorrect. His speculations concerning the relationship between the late Commandant Wang and Ning Gongyu were also erroneous. The dating of the inscription based on the sūtra-pillar was roughly correct, but as I will demonstrate, there is additional evidence that will make the dating more precise.

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<sup>424</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944, 22-23. As will also be discussed later, the eunuch-general Wang is more likely to be Wang Yuanyou 王元宥 instead.

<sup>425</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944, 7-1 and 22-23.

In addition to the section of donor inscription included above, the two remaining inscriptions (Figure 5- III & IV) are:

Imperial Commissioner of Military, Surveillance, Supervision and etc. of the Hedong [Circuit], acting Minister of *bugong*,<sup>426</sup> concurrent Censor-in-chief, Zheng  
勅河東節度觀察處置等使 檢校部工尚書 兼御史大夫 鄭  
Benefactor of Merit and Virtue, imperial commissioned Army Supervising  
Commissioner of the Hedong [Circuit], Yuan  
功德主 勅河東監軍使 元

And:

Commander-in-chief of the Dai Prefecture, Fiscal Commissioner for the Military  
Front, concurrent Vice Censor-in-chief, bestowed with the Color Purple and Gold  
Fish-pouch, Lu  
代州都督 供軍使 兼御史中丞 賜紫金魚袋 盧  
Acting Administrative Supervisor, Chen Pu from Houmo; Acting Administrator of  
the Personnel Evaluation Section, Cheng Lie  
攝錄事參軍 侯莫陳譜 攝功曹參軍 程例  
Assistant in the making of the Buddha Hall, former Acting Administrator of the  
Personnel Evaluation Section of Ze Prefecture, Zhang Gongchang; Former  
Commander of Dapuye Bureau, Wu Junliang  
助造佛殿 前澤州功曹參軍 張公長 大堡冶官衙前兵馬使 武君良  
Court Gentleman with Manifest Virtue, former Acting District Magistrate of  
Yanmen, Li Xingru, calligrapher; Former Inspector of the Prefecture Sector in charge  
of revenue at Yan Prefecture, Shao Zhuo  
宣德郎 前守雁門縣令 李行儒 書 前度支鹽州院巡覆官 邵卓

Liang Ssu-ch'eng was able to correctly identify the Imperial Commissioner “Zheng” as referring to Zheng Juan 鄭涓, but he didn't offer much analyses regarding the remaining donors. Most importantly, however, he did not address the nature or motivation behind this donor network, nor did he touch upon their funding mechanisms. The following

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<sup>426</sup> The issue concerning “Minister of *bugong* 部工尚書” will be discussed later.

discussions, thus, aim to explore these overlooked aspects, which are indispensable in reconstructing the historical background of the Buddha Hall renovation that took place in the Dazhong era.

#### IDENTIFYING THE LATE EUNUCH-GENERAL

Among the male donors of the Buddha Hall, Wang held the highest title, as “Commandant of the Right Army [of Divine Strategy] 右軍中尉”. As has been discussed previously, the two designated “Left and Right Armies of Divine Strategy 左右神策軍” are considered part of the Imperial Armies stationed in the capital city. The leaders of the armies are “Palace Commandant-protectors 護軍中尉 (abbr. Commandants 中尉)”, a position routinely occupied by eunuch-generals.<sup>427</sup> Although extensive research has been done on the eunuch-generals of the Tang dynasty, there are many gaps and uncertainties due to the lack of records.<sup>428</sup> The time between the initial creation of the Commandant position down to the end of Dazhong era witnessed three eunuch-generals with the surname “Wang” who served as Commandants of the Right Army, including Wang Yuanyou 王元宥 and Wang Maoxuan 王茂玄 in addition to the aforementioned Wang Shoucheng. After the Dazhong era, another eunuch surnamed Wang, Wang Zhongxian 王仲先, served in office.

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<sup>427</sup> The Right and Left Commandants could be designated to one person, who people usually refer to as “Commandant of the Two Armies 兩軍中尉”.

<sup>428</sup> Most notable are the strenuous efforts of scholars who culled through official documents for records of the appointments of Commandants over time, and compiled chronological charts listing these eunuch-generals according to their date in office. See Wang Shou-nan 1971, 55-67; Niu Zhiping 1987, 299-365; So Wai-man 2001, 607-772; and Huang Lou 2012, 336-337.

Wang Shoucheng, who was suggested to be the donor of the Buddha Hall by Liang, wielded substantial power through the reigns of four successive emperors starting from Emperor Xianzong. His career peaked after being appointed as the “Commandant of the Right Army 右軍中尉” of the Divine Strategy Army in Baoli 寶歷 3 (827 CE) during Emperor Wenzong’s reign. As Huang Lou has demonstrated, Emperor Xuanzong had painstakingly rendered his father’s death as resulted from a coup plotted by his elder brother Li Heng 李恆 (who later became Emperor Muzong 穆宗) and the Emperor Dowager Guo 郭太后, and some officials and eunuchs were also framed as co-conspirators. Wang Shoucheng, in particular, was portrayed as the chief executor of the assassination of Emperor Xianzong.<sup>429</sup>

Although Wang Shoucheng did not live to face the purge against the “usurpers of the Yuanhe era”,<sup>430</sup> a newly excavated funerary epigraph of his brother Wang Shouqi 王守

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<sup>429</sup> Huang Lou 2012, 52-60. What actually happened at the death of Emperor Xianzong and the enthronement of Li Heng was not clear. The previous theory, which would suit Emperor Xuanzong’s propaganda, was that Emperor Xianzong and his eldest son alive, the Prince Li 禮王 Li Yun 李憚, were both murdered by Li Heng and his mother Madam Guo 郭貴妃 (l.k.a. 郭太后) to clear the way for the young prince’s enthronement. Nevertheless, as Huang Lou has pointed out, Li Heng had already been selected as the Crown Prince at that time, and there would be no need to assassinate Emperor Xianzong to secure his succession. Huang offered a very persuasive reconstruction of this chain of events. Liang Shouqian 梁守謙, who was the Commandant of the Right Army, might have been secretly planning the disposal of Li Heng and the election of Li Yun instead. Nevertheless, when Wang Shoucheng and Chen Hongzhi 陳弘志 (var. Chen Hongqing 陳宏慶) assassinated Emperor Xianzong, probably because of his at the event of his increasingly violent temper resulted from taking Daoist elixirs, Liang and his faction had to abandon the plan in fear of being convicted for treason. Instead, they murdered Li Hui to show their loyalty. In addition, they also killed the Commandant of the Left Army Tutu Chengcui 吐突承璀, who was probably very insisting in making war on the rebellions and vindicating the state, in order to cover up the incident and avoid their conspiracy being exposed with investigations into Emperor Xianzong’s assassination. See Huang Lou 2012, 213-248, for detailed discussions and supporting evidence.

<sup>430</sup> Shortly before Wang’s death, he was “promoted” to be the “Inspector of the Left and Right Divine Strategy Armies 左右神策觀軍容使” and the “Director of the Twelve Guards 十二衛統軍”. Although

琦 (d. 849 CE) indicates that Wang Shoucheng's family suffered severely with his disposal by Emperor Wenzong.<sup>431</sup> Wang had been dead for more than two decades at the time of the building's completion, and the fallen Wang family most likely would not have had the financial power to initiate a grandiose project like the Buddha Hall.

More importantly, Wang Shoucheng had already been viewed as a grave menace during his lifetime, and his status declined even further after his fall. During the precaution against "usurpers of the Yuanhe era" under Emperor Xuanzong, such a commemorative project would never have been granted. Therefore, the Benefactor of Merits and Virtue of the Buddha Hall, the late Commandant of the Right Army, is very unlikely to have been Wang Shoucheng. On the other hand, both Wang Maoxuan and Wang Zhongxian's late dates of service excludes the possibility of their involvement in the project at the Foguangsi. Therefore, Wang Yuanyou is the most likely Benefactor of the Buddha Hall.<sup>432</sup>

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appear to be lofty titles with high status, they in fact possess no executive powers. In Dahe 大和 9 (835 CE), Emperor Wenzong had plotted his death by ordering his confidant to give Wang poisonous liquor. See *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f184, 21a-23b.

<sup>431</sup> Wang Shoucheng's family background was not covered in Tang official histories. Only one of his brothers, Wang Shoujuan 王守涓, was mentioned in passing, and he was also killed soon after Wang Shoucheng's death. Given that Wang Shouqi shares the same generation name *shou* 守 with them and lived at the same time period, Du Wenyu believed that they must be brothers. Their foster father was the eunuch Wang Yitong 王意通, mentioned in Wang Shouqi's epigraphy. Du also notes that Wang Shouqi started career with an honorific title, probably due to Wang Shoucheng's powerful status at that time. Shouqi served as a eunuch for over half a century, but only died in a minor post, only of the 9th rank. At the event of Shoucheng and Shoujuan's death, Shouqi probably only narrowly escaped execution, but remained as a minor official throughout his entire life. See Du Wenyu 1998, 82-83.

<sup>432</sup> To my knowledge, the first scholar that draws our attention to Wang Yuanyou is Toh Lam Huat. He went on to project a link between the title "Benefactor 功德主" and "Commissioner of Merit and Virtue 功德使" (Toh Lam Huat 2010). I Lo-fen furthered this observation and believes that the two titles must be interchangeable (I Lo-fen 2012). However, I find these proposed associations rather implausible, since "gongde (功德)" is a standard Chinese translation for the Buddhist concept of "merits", and "gongde zhu (功德主)" is a frequently used term for addressing Buddhist patrons. In addition, another patron of the Buddha

The low-profiled Wang Yuanyou escaped the attention of previous scholarship probably because no mention of him was made in Tang official histories. The major record indicating Wang Yuanyou's occupation was retrieved from an appointment document in the *Complete Writings of the Tang* 全唐文. The official who wrote Wang Yuanyou's appointment document was Du Mu 杜牧, who became a "Participant in the Drafting of Proclamations 知制誥" in Dazhong 5-6 (851-852 CE) and served until passing away in Dazhong 6 (852 CE). Thus, Wang Yuanyou must have been appointed as the Commandant of the Right Army at some point between Dazhong 5 and Dazhong 6 (851-852 CE).<sup>433</sup>

Furthermore, according to the "Stele of the Tang Dynasty Dharma Master Dinghui of Gui Peak, written by Pei Xiu 唐裴休書圭峯定慧禪師碑", which was a gift from Wang Yuanyou, its erection was in the tenth month of Dazhong 9 (855 CE). The contents of the stele indicate that Wang Yuanyou was still alive and in office at the time of this stele's erection.<sup>434</sup> We can further revise the dating of the inscription to sometime between the

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Hall, Yuan, also bore the Benefactor title, but he was not a Commissioner of Merits and Virtue. However, it is interesting that the two beneficiaries should be the two eunuchs.

<sup>433</sup> So Wai-man based his study on that of Wang Shou-nan and several other previous scholars', and compiled the "Chronological Chart of Commandants of Tang Armies of Divine Strategy and Palace Secretaries," as the appendix of his thesis (So Wai-man 2001, 607-622). His contribution to the current discussion is the settling of Wang Yuanyou's time appointment (ibid, 683-684). However, his research on the date when Wang Yuanyou left office can be improved based on the sources and discussions in this thesis.

<sup>434</sup> Wang Yuanyou was identified as the "Donor of the stele stone", and his titles were given as the "Commander of the Permanent Palace Guard 指揮驍騎軍, General Chief Palace Commandant-Protector 總護都尉, the concurrent Commissioner of Merit and Virtue of the Right Avenue 右街功德使, Great Cavalry General 驃騎大將軍, acting Receptionist of the Palace Domestic Service 內侍省謁者, Chief Investigating Censor 監察督使, Duke of the State of Cai 蔡國公, feudal benefice of three thousand households". As I have already discussed, "Commissioner of Merit and Virtue of the Right Avenue" is a position routinely held by "Commandant of the Right Army of Divine Strategy".

tenth month of Dazhong 9 (855 CE) and the fifth month of Dazhong 10 (856 CE).<sup>435</sup>

From the texts discussed above, we can infer that Wang Yuanyou was in office beginning in Dazhong 5 (851 CE) or Dazhong 6 (852 CE), and remained in the position until he died in Dazhong 9 (855 CE) or Dazhong 10 (856 CE), shortly before the completion of the Buddha Hall. After becoming the Commissioner of Merit and Virtue, Wang Yuanyou also took up the position of the “Head of the Buddhist Registry of the Left Avenue 左街僧錄” of the Capital in Dazhong 8 (854 CE).<sup>436</sup> It is worth pointing out that unlike the traditional eunuch-occupied Commissioner position, the Central Buddhist Register is normally led by a senior monk of the capital monasteries, recognized by the state as leaders of the empire-wide Buddhist clergy.<sup>437</sup> The Head of the Right Avenue appointed at the same time with Wang Yuanyou was the venerable monk Cengche 僧澈 (var. 僧徹; a.k.a. Master Jinguan 淨光).<sup>438</sup> This unconventional appointment may indicate

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<sup>435</sup> Since the inscriptions on the four-rafter beams do not have any clear indication of dates, Liang Ssu-ch’eng had tentatively dated the completion of the renovation project to Dazhong 11 (857 CE), assuming that the sūtra pillar was erected after the project in that year in front of the hall (Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944). Li Yumin later revised the date to from the ninth month of Dazhong 9 (855 CE) to the fifth month of Dazhong 10 (856 CE) by proposing a “lower bound” of the time bracket, determined by Zheng Juan’s time in office. Thus, the completion date could not be earlier than the ninth month of Dazhong 9 (855 CE), when Zheng Juan took office, or later than the fifth month of Dazhong 10 (856 CE), by which time Liu Zhuan would have succeeded him (Li Yumin 1986, 10 and 27). Given that the Benefactor of the Buddha Hall very likely refers to Wang Yuanyou, the precision of the dating of the Buddha Hall inscription can be improved substantially, with the “upper bound” of the date of completion to sometime to the ten month of Dazhong 9 (855 CE), since Wang was still alive then and would not be referred to as the “late Commandant”. That is to say, according to the stele of Dinghui, Wang Yuanyou was still alive and in office in the ten month of Dazhong 9 (855 CE), and the inscription must have been written sometime after this date, or Wang Yuanyou would not have been referred to as the “late Commandant of the Right Army Wang”.

<sup>436</sup> *Brief History of Buddhists compiled under the Great Song Dynasty* 大宋僧史略 (T54n2126), 0255b.

<sup>437</sup> Charles O. Hucker 1985, 405.

<sup>438</sup> Cengche’s biography is included in “Biography of Sengche of the Da’anguo si in Tang’s capital city 唐京兆大安國寺僧徹傳” in the *Song Biographies* (T50n2061, 0744c-0745a). For discussion of the life of

Wang Yuanyou's deep devotion in Buddhism.

Additional information of Wang Yuanyou has been brought to light by research on an excavated epigraphs. The biographical sketch of Lady Wang,<sup>439</sup> who is identified as Wang Yuanyou's younger sister, suggests that Wang Yuanyou was adopted into the "Taiyuan Wang (太原王)" clan. Lady Wang was married to Chou Wenyi 仇文義, the paternal uncle of Chou Shiliang. The practice of adoption and intermarriage between eunuch families is key for understanding their constructed power network and their long lasting influence towards the end of the Tang dynasty, and the demonstrated intermarriage between the Wang and Chou families could also be explained in this context. The Wang and Chou family ties could also shed light to Wang Yuanyou's rise, since according to Huang Lou, the Chou clan of eunuchs was central to the power struggle that paved the way to Emperor Xuanzong's enthronement, and members of the clan enjoyed power and prosperity in the Dazhong era despite the severe strike it suffered from the death of Chou Shiliang in the hands of Emperor Wuzong.<sup>440</sup>

#### THE FEMALE DEVOTEE NING GONGYU

For the female devotee Ning Gongyu, her title as the "Benefactor of the Buddha

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Sengche, see Wang and Ji 2009.

<sup>439</sup> See the memorial inscription of Lady Wang in *Supplement to the Complete Writings of the Tang* 全唐文補遺, vol. 2, 61-62. See also Du Yuwen 2002.

The epigraph of Wang Yuanyou's second adopted daughter was also retrieved. She was married to the eunuch Ma Gongdu 馬公度, see "Memorial Stele for Lady Wang, Wife of Ma Gongdu 馬公度妻王氏墓誌銘." It also serves as counterevidence against the previous identification of Ning Gongyu as Wang Yuanyou's daughter, since Wang's daughters did follow his surname, and use referred to as Lady Wang.

<sup>440</sup> Huang Lou 2012, 15-22.



Hall (佛殿主)” without a doubt suggests the prominence of her patronage.<sup>441</sup> Regarding the possible relationship between Wang Yuanyou and Ning Gongyu, while Liang’s speculation serves to remind us of the child adoptions and intermarriages commonly practiced by powerful eunuchs during the Tang period, nevertheless, Ning Gongyu was probably not related to Wang through those means. Notice that Ning Gongyu’s name was given in full, in stark contrast to most inscriptions of female donors that only referred to them by their surnames “Madam so-and-so (某氏)” or their pet name at home.<sup>442</sup> On the other hand, extant literature and excavated epigraphs of eunuchs and their family members from the late Tang all suggest that after a child had been adopted by a eunuch, he or she would take on the surname of that eunuch.<sup>443</sup> Ning Gongyu’s surname is clearly different from that of the Eunuch-general, or any other male donors whose names appear in the inscriptions. As for women who were married to eunuchs, like other married women in

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<sup>441</sup> One may recall the title of “Benefactor of the [Mañjuśrī] Pavilion (閣主)” held by Emperor Daizong. Similar titles can be seen in Buddhist Grotto, referred to as “Benefactor of the Cave[-temple] (窟主)”, for instance, in Dunhuang Caves 5. See Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 1986, 256.

<sup>442</sup> This is true for both female commers and women with status. For women with imperially bestowed honorific titles, they also only append their surname after the list of positions they held, such as in Dunhuang Cave 138 (dated to the late Tang), “the wife of Gentleman Zhang, the Military Commissioner of Hexi Circuit, later imperially recognized Great Lady of Wuwei Commandery, Madam Yin 張公夫人河西節度使後敕授武威郡君太夫人陰氏”. An example of female lay devotee could be found in Dunhuang Cave 45 (dated to the high Tang), which has the inscription “female disciple, Madam Wu 武氏”. To name another example, in Dunhuang Cave 468 (dated to the late Tang), “the daughter, who achieved the sudden enlightenment of Mahayana teaching, the *Upasika*, Shi’erniang 十二娘”. See Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 1986; Ma De 1996; Liu Jinglong and Li Yukun 1998.

<sup>443</sup> Cross-surname adoption was technically illegal. According to the *Collected Documents of Tang*, in Zhenguan 7 (791 CE), an imperial edict was issued that: “[Those who have] the fifth rank or above in the Palace Domestic Service is allowed to adopt one child, who should be from families of the same surname. When first adopted, [the child] should not be more than 10 years old.” However, the prohibiting law only existed on paper. Cross-surname adoptions were still being practiced, but the adopted children without exception followed the surname of their adopters. See Du Wenyu 2002, 169-179.

ancient China, they would have been identified in relation to their husband in such inscriptions.<sup>444</sup> Therefore, we can conclude that Ning Gongyu was an unmarried young woman, a lay Buddhist, not related by blood, adoption or marriage to any other benefactors of the Buddha Hall.

What kind of powerful background would allow Ning Gongyu to take up the eminent role of imperial commissioner, and how much wealth did she possess that enabled her to be the primary donor of this magnificent project? Extant historical records do not have any ready answer. Nevertheless, another part of this inscription may offer some clues. Ning Gongyu was referred to as the “Offering Deliverance 送供”, which is likely to be an abbreviation for “Offering Deliverance Commissioner 送供使”,<sup>445</sup> that is, commissioners sent to Buddhist sites to pay reverence and present offerings on behalf of the imperial

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<sup>444</sup> As has been tested by names of female donors seen in donor inscriptions at Longmen, Dunhuang, other extant Tang Buddhist sites or literature, they were often referred as “the wife (*qi* 妻, more formally, *furen* 夫人, or more humbly *xinfu* 新婦, *xinniangzi* 新娘子, *xiaoniangzi* 小娘子)”, followed by their surname. Maidservants were mentioned as “the young girl (*ningzi* 妮子)”. In addition, male members were listed as the main donors in projects sponsored by a family or a clan, while the rest of female members will be referred to according to their kinship with these males, such as “the elder sister (*zi* 姊)”, “the younger sister (*mei* 妹)”, and so forth. In fact, unmarried women would also tend to be referred to in relation to her father, as “the daughter (*nü* 女)”, which serves as an additional evidence that Ning was not adopted by Wang.

<sup>445</sup> Sun Xiushen 1998. To my knowledge, this connection with “Offering Deliverance Commissioner” is first noted by Toh Lam Huat (Toh Lam Huat 2010). I Lo-fen, in reviewing Toh Lam Huat’s thesis, disputed his theory, by pointing out the attire of the statue more resembles a woman rather than a deity. She added that the title “Offering Deliverance [Commissioners] 送供” indicates Ning was a “Lady for Service 供奉官” (I Lo-fen 2012). This speculation needs further research, since the official positions such as “Court Service 供奉” or “Lady for Service 供奉官” that appeared in different stages of the Tang Dynasty are not that well understood (Charles O. Hucker 1985, 292; see also Zhao Dongmei 2000). There are other interpretations in regard to the identity of Ning Gongyu. For example, Zhu Limin and Wu Tingting hypothesized that Ning Gongyu is actually the Yongfu Princess 永福公主 in disguise. They also argued that “Benefactor of the Buddha Hall” must be referring to another person, possibly the Emperor Xuanzong himself (Zhu Limin and Wu Tingting 2012, 89-90). I find these speculations rather groundless.

family or the court. For instance, the *Record of the Orthodox Lineage of the Patriarchs since the Buddha* recorded one such occasion, when the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit Pei Du 裴度 saw auspicious clouds above the Foguangsi and memorialized to the throne, the emperor soon dispatched Offering Deliverance Commissioners to present offerings to the tens of thousands of Bodhisattvas.<sup>446</sup> In addition to domestic commissioners, Dunhuang poems and Mount Wutai murals also depicted Deliverance Commissioners sent by foreign states.<sup>447</sup>

The road leading to Mount Wutai from the imperial capital of Chang'an has already been well studied and reconstructed, and Ennin travelled along the same path in his journey from Mount Wutai to Chang'an.<sup>448</sup> The same route was probably shared by pilgrims and commissioners.<sup>449</sup> From Ennin's travelogues, we can infer that commissioners were sent to

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<sup>446</sup> T49n2035, 0384b.

<sup>447</sup> Two verses found in songs and eulogies of Mount Wutai, also speak of the so-called "Offering Deliverance Route 送供路": "The path along the offering deliverance route is narrow and treacherously difficult to wade through; [The flowers] on the roadside have been contributing [to the Buddhists] ever since they started blooming. 送供路旁隘難過。一自開花施無休。" Mary Anne Cartelli has a translation but it appears to be very problematic. Among other errors, she does not seem to understand "*songgong lu* (送供路)" and mistakenly rendered the phrase as "supplies are delivered to the roadsides" (Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 134). Her studies offer an introduction to the set of songs and eulogies of Mount Wutai recovered from Dunhuang manuscripts. *Songgong lu*, or the offering deliverance route, is discussed later, together with the "Incense Offering Route 進香道". For depictions of Offering Deliverance Commissioners in Dunhuang murals.

<sup>448</sup> Yen Keng-wan 1985, vol.1, 91-128, "The Route from Chang'an to Taiyuan," and vol. 5, 1336-1358, "Route from Taiyuan to the Yanmen Pass." Another historic route into the Wutai area from the central plain across the Taihang Mountains was recorded in *Maps and Records of Prefectures and Counties in the Yuanhe Era* 元和郡縣圖誌. According the monk Ennin's travelogues, scholars were able to reconstruct the route, which they also refer to as the "Incense Offering Route to Mount Wutai 五台山進香道". It is a path shared by pilgrims, wandering monks and nuns, and tradesmen. Despite being mountainous, the roads had a considerable amount of traffic, with facilities that provide food and logging every six to ten miles. See Yen Keng-wan 1985, vol.5, 1507-1512, "Incense Offering Route to Mount Wutai."

<sup>449</sup> Ennin appeared to have run into commoners who self-described as "Offering Delivers 送供人" on his way

Buddhist sites by both the imperial court and local governments,<sup>450</sup> and as a commissioner from the Superior Capital Chang'an, Ning Gongyu probably carried a direct imperial order. After arriving in the Mount Wutai area, Ennin also witnessed and recorded that imperial commissioners' offerings stored at the Great Avatamsaka Monastery 大華嚴寺, and that the monk there told him about the commissioners' yearly offering to the monastery.<sup>451</sup>

#### OTHER DONOR OFFICIALS OF THE BUDDHA HALL

In inscription sections III and IV, the official ranking of donors gets lower and lower as we move along the list from north to south. (Figure 5) Among them, Zheng and Yuan are both officials directly dispatched to the region from the court,<sup>452</sup> whereas the six

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to Mount Wutai, who stayed at the same Buddhist establishments for travelers along the route, the so-called Common Cloisters 普通院. For instance, Ennin recorded that: "[I] arrived at the Jie[tuo] Common Cloister 解[脱]普通院. A party of more than a hundred monks, nuns, women, and Offering Deliverers, who were all on a pilgrim to Mount Wutai, lodged with us in the cloister" (Edwin O. Reischauer 1955 a, 213).

<sup>450</sup> It could be inferred from an imperial edict issued in third month of Huichang 4 (845 CE) banning Offering Deliverance Commissioners from local governments during the Huichang Persecution: "An Imperial edict was also issued saying that, whereas festivals being held for the Buddha's finger [bone relics] in the monasteries at Mount Wutai in Dai prefecture, the Puguangwangsi 普光王寺 of Si prefecture 泗州, the Five Terraces of Mount Zhongnan, and the Famensi of Fengxiang municipality 鳳翔府, no offerings or pilgrimages [to these places] were to be permitted. If someone presents a single cash, he is to receive twenty strokes of the cane on his back, and, if a monk or a nun at the said place accepts a single cash, he is to receive twenty strokes of cane on his back. If in the various circuits, prefectures and counties, there should be those who sent Offering Deliverers, they are to be seized on the spot and given twenty strokes of the cane on the back." According to Ennin, the edict prevented any offering venues for the four holy places. See Edwin O. Reischauer 1955 a, 240.

<sup>451</sup> Edwin O. Reischauer 1955 a, 231-232.

<sup>452</sup> As their titles indicate, they are "imperial commissioned (*chi*[*shou*] 敕[授])". It is common practice to use the "*chi* (敕)" prefix before one's official titles, as seen in donor inscriptions at grotto sites and in other occasions as well. Technically speaking, only positions in the 6th rank or below use this procedure during the Tang. See discussions of "*ceshou* (冊授)", "*zhishou* (制授)", and "*shishou* (敕授)", in Wang Xuncheng, 2001. However, it is peculiar that for many extant cases, the titles prefixed with "*chi* (敕)" are above the 6th rank.

donors listed in the last section of inscription appear to be local officials.<sup>453</sup>

The Imperial Commissioner “Zheng 鄭”, has been identified as Zheng Juan 鄭涓, who controlled both military and non-military affairs of the entire Hedong Circuit. The inscription also shows that he held an honorific “Minister 尚書” title of a misspelt “*bugong* (部工)” ministry. Instead of simply seeing it as a naïve mistake for “Ministry of Works 工部” with the two characters reversed, close examinations would reveal traces of corrections, which indicate that the calligrapher Li Xingru originally wanted to write “Ministry of Justice 刑部” and ended up correcting it to “*bugong* (部工)”.<sup>454</sup> It was clear that Li was unfamiliar with Zheng’s official positions,<sup>455</sup> which would be a precise reflection of the administrative system of the late-Tang period, when previously prominent titles for heads of the Six Ministries became merely “indicators of salary (寄祿)” and “markers of status (轉運)”.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> For more information on the official positions of “Administrative Supervisor 錄事參軍” and “Administrator of the Personnel Evaluation Section 功曹參軍”, see Wang Qinghong 2012, and Lai S. F. 2004, 223. For “Fiscal Commissioner for Military Front 供軍使”, see Jia Zhigang 2001. For “Commander 兵馬使”, see Zhao Mingyi 2005.

<sup>454</sup> The top left part (立) of the “*bu* (部)” character was originally written as the top left part (开) of “*xing* (刑)”, but was later added with a stroke on top to change it into “*bu* (部)”.

<sup>455</sup> It has also been speculated that since there are many other officials with the surname Zheng, the calligrapher might have confused Zheng Juan with Zheng Zhu 鄭助, who had the Honorific Minister of Works as his title while Zheng Juan was promoted from the Honorific “Minister of Justice 刑部尚書” to the “Minister of Rites 禮部尚書” to the Honorific Minister of Justice. It seems unlikely since Zheng Zhu had been on imperial commissions in Southern China during most of Emperor Xuanzong’s reign (Yu Xianhao 2000, 195, 321, 949 and 1016). There are other interpretations of this mistake. Zhu Limin and Zhu Tingting believe the inscription could be referring to the three Ministers surnamed Zheng at the same time (Zhu Limin and Zhu Tingting 2012). I find this argument very unlikely to be the case.

<sup>456</sup> Although the development of traditional official titles into symbolic indicators of salary and status was a long-term change that continued well into the Song period, its emergence was partly caused by the social and political peculiarity of the mid- and late Tang period. Scholars of Chinese history have often referred to this phenomenon as the “stratus abstraction of official titles (階官化)”. See Feng Peihong 2007b.

Holding concurrent titles was not a unique phenomenon for commanders of outlying provinces. Nevertheless, as noted by Feng Peihong, concurrent titles were most typically held by “dispatched officials (外官)”, especially the “serving posts (幕職)” in “semi-independent provinces (藩鎮)”.<sup>457</sup> The situation had its roots in the crisis of the mid-eighth century, when the An Lushan Rebellion gave birth to an increasingly powerful and decentralized provincial order.<sup>458</sup> Similar observations can be made by examining the titles of other officials recorded in the inscription. For instance, another donor “Lu 盧”, the “Commander-in-chief of Dai Prefecture 代州都督” and “Fiscal Commissioner for the Military Front 供軍使”, held the title of “Concurrent Vice Censor-in-chief 兼御史中丞”, and was “bestowed with the Color Purple and Gold Fish-pouch (賜紫金魚袋)”. His high status seems to contradict the lack of historical accounts about him, which prevents us from offering identifications that are more precise.<sup>459</sup> Nevertheless, the common trend of

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<sup>457</sup> Feng Peihong 2007 b, 134.

<sup>458</sup> C. A. Peterson 1979, 464-560. While commissioners were only temporary posts during the early Tang period, after the An Lushan rebellion, dispatching imperial commissioner became a regular event, and most of these commissioners were very powerful, who almost had the powers of governors of autonomous regions. New temporary official positions were also created to cope with the rising issues across the struggling, insecure and divided empire. Many of these posts were never withdrawn, and were kept to the end of the Tang period, the best example being the “Military Commissioners 節度使” created in Jingyun 景雲 2 (711 CE), which soon gained considerable authority (Denis Twitchett 1965; id. 1976). These new “duty assignments (使職)” rarely had precedence in the regular administrative system, and therefore did not have institutionalized standards for ranking or salary (Lai S. F. 2006, 175-208; id. 2011, 138-150; id. 2012 a, 325-339; 2012 b, 46-50). As a result, the officers often had “side titles (帶職)” solely for administrative purposes (Feng Peihong 2007 b). These titles are often indicated by prefixes such as “acting (檢校)”, “concurrent (兼)” or “probationary (試)”, which usually preceded positions stationed in the capital city (Feng Peihong 2007 b, 134). As pointed out by Zhang Guogang, these positions gradually became empty titles for honorary status without any real authority (Zhang Guogang 1987, 160-161).

<sup>459</sup> Zhang Yanying and Li Yan and suggested that Lu is probably Lu Shang 盧商 (Zhang Yanying and Li Yan 2010, 132-134). It is very unlikely since Lu Shang already held higher positions prior to the Buddha Hall project than the inscriptions suggest (Yu Xianhao 2000, 2387-2388).

holding concurrent titles betrays the seemingly distinctive and prominent status of this Vice Censor-in-chief.

Overall, the names and titles of the donors of the Buddha Hall suggest administrative connections more than anything else. The underlying patronage network of the project, therefore, contrasted the majority of contemporary donor inscriptions that suggest a kinship relation between donors and indicate family sponsorships. For example, Mogao Cave 196 at Dunhuang, whose construction was dated to its Turfan occupation period in late Tang, displays the following group of donors:

Imperial Commissioner of Military, Surveillance, Supervision, Foreign Affairs, and Agriculture, etc. of the Sha, Gua, Yi, and Xi Prefectures, Acting General for Pacifying Faraway Lands, Honorific Minister of Military and Censor-in-chief, Duke of the Men Sate of the Julu Commandery, who holds a feudal benefice of two thousand households, bestowed with two hundred households, bestowed with the Color Purple and Gold Fish-porch, Supreme Pillar of State, Suo Xun, offers nourishment with all his heart;

敕歸義軍節度沙瓜伊西等州管內觀察處置押番落營田等使 守定遠將軍 檢校吏部尚書 兼御史大夫 鉅鹿郡門國公 食邑貳仟戶 實封二百戶 賜紫金魚袋 上柱國 索勳一心供養

Son, late Grand Guardian; Grandson, Gentleman for Court Discussion, Acting Senior Subaltern of Sha Prefecture, and Honorific Vice Censor-in-chief, through the auspices of Xun, offers nourishment with all his heart; [...]

男 故太保 孫 朝議郎 守沙州長史 兼御史中丞 承勳一心供養 [...]

Late father, He Caoqiu [...] offers nourishment with all his heart; [...]

故 父 [...] 何曹求一心供養 [...]

Late Buddhist devotee, He Yanzi, offers nourishment with all his heart [...]

故 清信弟子 何延子一心供養 [...]<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiuyuan 1986, 86-69. This serves as a typical example, as demonstrated in the standard donor composition at Dunhuang Grotto.

The inscriptions clearly indicate a family project, with a main male donor, Suo 索, followed by deceased relatives from his wife's family, which is surnamed He 何. The list continues to include assisting monks, the womenfolk of his family, and a person surnamed Song 宋 who married a women from the Suo clan. By comparison, it is clear that the inscriptions at the Buddha Hall are of a completely different nature. The lack of family ties between the donors and the suggestion of bureaucratic connections further demonstrated that the building of the Buddha Hall was an official project rather than private commission.<sup>461</sup>

#### MISSING MONKS

In addition to the four groups of inscriptions on the bottom of the four-rafter beams discussed above, there are nine inscription plaques, installed on the bottom of the other beams of the Buddha Hall, most notably under the “two-rafter beams (乳栿)” that span the front aisle and the inner architraves running parallel to the aisle. While those plaques mainly bear later dates, what concerns us here is the discovery of additional inscriptions beneath the plaques, written directly on the bottom sides of the crescent beams. They were covered by layers of later paint, the inscriptions were only partially exposed where the paint had peeled off. The character “*seng* 僧 (monk)” is clearly recognizable several times. Since the inscriptions were executed in the same calligraphic style as the aforementioned inscriptions on the four-rafter beams, and given their location beneath both the plaques and

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<sup>461</sup> There are few exceptions, when the devotees were connected to each other through social groups, referred to as “communities (社)”. See Zhang Peijun 2008. However, the Buddha Hall is not of this nature.



layers of paints, the writings were very likely contemporaneous with the four-rafter beam inscriptions.<sup>462</sup> We may recall that in other Tang dynasty imperial constructions on the Wutai Mountains, such as the Golden Pavilion built under Amoghavajra, monks were often important participants of the projects. The discovery of the names of monks at the Buddha Hall would explain their otherwise strange absence.

One may compare the Buddha Hall donors with the ones identified on the sūtra-pillar erected in front of the Buddha Hall roughly one or two years after its completion, which presumably had a similar background and patronage. (Figure 6) The foremost section contains the votive inscription. The list of patrons started with two nuns as the “Benefactors of the Sūtra-Pillar (石幢主)”, who were granted imperial permission for their project. The names of two local officials and an artisan were appended as persons who would “pick up some minor [merits] (小拾)”. (Figure 6- I) Listed next were the monks involved, including Fayuan 法元, Faqing 法清, Huiming 惠明 and Wenzong 文宗, whose names stood out among the rest as the main donors. They were followed by names of the abbot 寺主 (Skt. *vihārasvāmin*), the rector 上座 (Skt. *sthavira*), and the administrator 都維那 (Skt. *karmadāna*).<sup>463</sup> This second section also contains twelve monks whose titles were unspecified, and another twenty-three monks headed by Yuancheng 願誠 (var. 願成, d. 887 CE), who were referred to as the “Benefactor of the Buddha Hall (佛殿主)”. (Figure 6-II)

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<sup>462</sup> The plaque was placed over later paint and seems to never have been relocated. The date of these inscriptions predates both the Jin plaque and the earlier repainting(s).

<sup>463</sup> The abbot, rector and administrator were usually referred to as the “Three Directors (三綱, lit. three cords or bonds)” of a monastery, see Chen Jinhua 2002a, 213.

Section III included the names of eight monks and nuns, and the “Benefactor of the Buddha Hall” Ning Gongyu, followed by two more nuns who were probably in her service. Sections IV and V listed the names of official donors. The most prominent one was Bi Xian 畢誠 (802-864 CE), who served as the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit during Dazhong 11-13 (857-859 CE) after the aforementioned Zheng Juan and his successor Liu Zhuan 劉瑑 (796-858 CE). Similar to Zheng Juan, Bi Xian also held honorific titles, including the “Acting Minister of Military 檢校兵部尚書” and “Concurrent Censor-in-chief 兼御史大夫”. He was joined by more officials, including the “Vice Commissioner 節度副使”, “Acting Director of the Treasury Bureau 檢校金部郎中”, and “Concurrent Vice Censor-in-chief 兼御史中丞” Yuan Chongke 源重可, along with others who worked in the Hedong Circuit under him. Finally, section VI was filled with the names of several dozen of female devotees.<sup>464</sup>

The sūtra-pillar inscription reveals a more comprehensive network of persons involved in the project. In addition to officials and lay devotees (sections IV-VI), it included the names of monks and nuns (sections I-III) who may have also participated in the building of the Buddha Hall. Yuancheng, in particular, was mentioned as the other “Benefactor of the Buddha Hall”, whose name was missing from the inscriptions on the four-rafter beams. Given the newly discovered inscriptions found beneath the two-rafter beams, we can conclude that there is another section of donor inscriptions yet to be

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<sup>464</sup> The officials and female donors sometimes have names of their family members appended behind theirs, as indicated by “son (男) so-and-so” or “daughter (小女) so-and-so”.

uncovered, which would most likely contain information on contributors from the Buddhist community. It should be noted that the prominent positioning of these inscriptions on the two-rafter beams signals their importance, which suggests the prominent role of Yuancheng, his fellow monks, and probably nuns as well.

According to Yuancheng's biographies in the *Expanded Record* and the *Song Biographies*, he was ordained at the Foguangsi in Taihe 太和 5 (831 CE) and studied with the eminent monk Xingyan 行嚴. It was said that during the Huichang Persecution, Master Yuancheng held his mind without change. After Emperor Xuanzong ascended to the throne and Buddhism was revived, Yuancheng was selected to head the monastic community at Mount Wutai, and was granted permission to rebuild the deserted Foguangsi. According to Zanning:

[With Yuancheng's] resolution, renovations were completed one after another. Overflowing praises [of Yuancheng's contributions] reached the ears of the Emperor [Xuanzong], who without any delay decreed to bestow [him with] the Purple Attire (i.e. the Purple *Kāṣāya*).

發心次第新成。美聲洋洋。聞於帝聽。飄馳聖旨雲降紫衣。<sup>465</sup>

Given that Yuancheng's achievements were well recognized by Emperor Xuanzong, it was not surprising that the Foguangsi would receive extraordinary patronage from the court during Yuancheng's tenure.

#### THE FOGUANGSI BUDDHA HALL AS AN IMPERIAL UNDERTAKING

From the above analysis of the composition of donors, it is obvious that the Buddha

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<sup>465</sup> *Song Biographies* (T50n2061), 0883b.

Hall of the Foguangsi was an official project rather than privately patronized by individuals, a collective household or Buddhist organizations. In addition to the names of donors and other persons involved in the building project, writings located on the third four-rafter beam from the north (Figure 5-II) stands out as an extremely informative “votive inscription (願文)”, offering a window into the motivations of the patrons:

By imperial order, [we] reverently made the seven-bay Buddha Hall for the Empire. Prostrating [ourselves] on the ground], [we] wish that the Your Divine Majesty (i.e. the Emperor) be pleased, that it will be a time of good harvest and prosperity, that the rain and wind will be favorable, and that the arms will be at rest. Almsgivers from the ten directions wish to turn the wheel of the Dharma. With compassion granted to the Dharma-realm, wish all could attain Buddhahood.

奉為 國敬造佛殿柒間。伏願龍天歡喜。歲稔時康。雨順風調。干戈休息。十方施主。願轉法輪。法界有情。悉願成佛。

The beginning of this inscription is extremely important, but it has yet to receive due attention, partly caused by mistakes in published transcriptions.<sup>466</sup> None of the major reports to date has correctly recorded the first five characters,<sup>467</sup> which I have translated as “reverently made for the empire upon imperial order (奉為國敬造)”. (Figure 5-II)

<sup>466</sup> The beams bearing these inscriptions are located high above the ground, and would be very hard to access for investigators who do not have the permission to use lighting and cameras inside the hall. In addition, a metal fence has been added to protect the statues, which also prevents visitors from making close observations. Most of the scholars have to rely on published transcriptions, which are all problematic. Toh Lam Huat is an exception. He also noticed that the two characters “*fengwei*” and pointed out the imperial status of this building project. See Toh Lam Huat 2010.

<sup>467</sup> Liang was the first to publish the inscriptions, with the first character “*feng* (奉)” missing (Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944, 60). Rhie followed Liang’s report, but further mistook the seventeenth character “*ren* (稔)” as “*ti* (提)”, and the thirty-ninth character “*qing* (情)” as “*qing* (清)” (Marylin M. Rhie 1977, 31-36). Zhang and Li’s transcription missed the two key characters, “*feng* (奉)” and “*guo* (國)” (Zhang Yingying and Li Yan 2010, 130). The transcription recorded by Lü Zhou and the Tsinghua investigation team mistranscribed several characters, the third character “*guo* (國)” was rendered “*chi* (敕)”, the eleventh character “*yuan* (願)” as “*zhi* (詣)”, the twelfth character “*long* (龍)” as “*chi* (赤)”, and finally the fortieth character “*xi* (悉)” as “*you* (遊)” (Lü Zhou 2011, 217).

As discussed previously, the “upon imperial order (奉為)” formula in votive inscriptions unmistakably signals direct permission issued by the throne, while a pious act “for the empire (為國)” denotes the unification of the Buddhist cause, the imperial cause. The building of Foguangsi Buddha Hall, therefore, invites further comparison with the aforementioned pavilion projects overseen by Amoghavajra, which were also imperial undertakings for the welfare of the empire.<sup>468</sup> To start with, I argue that both projects were undertaken amongst instability and warfare, designed to evoke the protective powers of Mount Wutai and its principle deity Mañjuśrī. However, make no mistake, Yuancheng was no Amoghavajra, and the reign of Emperor Xuanzong was also quite different from that of Emperor Daizong. Despite both being imperially authorized Buddhist projects, I demonstrate the essential differences in the funding mechanisms and donor network of the Buddha Hall and the Golden Pavilion.

During the early years of Emperor Xuanzong’s reign, conflicts on the north and northwest boarder had seemingly improved, with the Tang court taking advantage of the collapse of the Tibetan 吐蕃 and Uyghur 回鶻 (var. 回紇) Empires and regaining some territory in the Hexi Corridor.<sup>469</sup> Yet against this promising trend, several Tangut 党項 tribes that had migrated east and settled in the Ordos and Hedong regions caused

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<sup>468</sup> See the previous section “Building the Mañjuśrī Pavilions for the Empire” in this chapter.

<sup>469</sup> For example, Emperor Xuanzong boasted the “virtuous deeds of regaining the Hehuang area (收復河湟德音)” in Dazhong 3 (849 CE) as if it was his achievement. In fact, the “Three Prefectures and Seven Passes 三州七關” were handed over to the Tang court by bLon Khrom brZhe 論恐熱 (d. 866 CE), a “General Consoler” of the Tibetan Empire during their ongoing civil wars, in seeking of protection and welfare from the Tang court. As Huang Lou has demonstrated, the Tang court did not spare any effort in the recovering process (Huang Lou 2012, 145-155, and 291-304).

considerable unrests.<sup>470</sup> In Dazhong 4-5 (580-581 CE), Emperor Xuanzong reinforced his Tangut policies in recognition of the escalating situation. Military companies were strengthened, which saw the dispatch of Liu Zhuan as the “Tangut Bandit Suppression and Pacification Commissioner of the Capital West Mobile Brigade 京西招討党項行營宣慰使”, and Li Ye 李業 (d.u.) and Li Shi 李拭 (d.u.) as the “Tangut Bandit Suppression Commissioners 招討党項使” months later. A diplomatic solution was also sought by the Grand Consular Bai Minzhong 白敏中 (792-861 CE) and his fraction when he took the office of “Commander of the Nanshan and Pingxia [Tangut] Bandit Suppression Mobile Brigade 招討南山平夏行營兵馬都統”.<sup>471</sup> Emperor Xuanzong’s policies were successful in preventing the further exacerbation of the Tang-Tangut conflicts.<sup>472</sup> However, Tangut raids continued to pose major threats to border security throughout the Dazhong era.

It is worth noting that the Hedong Circuit, where Mount Wutai was located, was central to the Tang-Tangut conflicts. As mentioned above, the region has long been a strategic stronghold. It gained even more significance as a shield against the Tangut population in the north and northwester border region.<sup>473</sup> Li Shi, one of the two Tangut

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<sup>470</sup> With the destruction of the state of Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 and the expansion of the Tibetan Empire had led to the migration of Tangut tribes eastward at the end of the seventh century. By the Tianbao era (742-755 CE), they had become the dominant non-Han element in the Ordos region. However, Tibetan raids into the Ordos in the late eighth century caused further relocation of the Tangut tribes into the Hedong Circuit in interior China. Used by the Tang as a buffer against the Tibetan encroachment, the Tangut tribes started revolting against heavy drafting and other abuses in the Huichang era (841-846 CE). See Paul Friedland 1969, 205-245.

<sup>471</sup> Zhou Weizhou 2006, 71-75.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>473</sup> For the importance of Hedong Circuit during the late Tang period, see Guei Chi-Shun 1990, and id. 1994, 51-69.

Bandit Suppression Commissioners took office in Dazhong 4 (850 CE), concurrently served as the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit. He was employed to replace the previous commissioner Wang Zai 王宰, who failed to address the tensions on the border. In his recruitment edict, Emperor Xuanzong acknowledged the imposing threats and expected Li Shi to save the situation:

With the majestic stronghold of Mengjin<sup>474</sup> and the renowned metropolitan of Dalu (i.e., Taiyuan), [the Hedong Circuit] had control over the three rivers and held a network of seven cities.<sup>475</sup> [Its] custom is similar to that of Buluo (i.e., Luoyang), and [its] landscape is as magnificent as the Capital (Chang'an). [...] I, the Emperor, was determined to entrust our troops to the most outstanding general. The Celestial Warriors Army was not actively engaged even when the barbarian tribes were assaulting the border, since the illness [Wang] Zai suffered had undermined the operations of the entire army, [...] the forceful and resourceful [Li] Shi should be the ideal candidate and thereby chosen [to replace Wang Zai]. [Li Shi] had proved capable in managing the troops and thereby earned a great reputation. [He] is advised to change the previous ways of China [used to deal with the barbarians], and carry out a robust battle at the Northern Gateway [of our territory].

盟津雄屏。大鹵名都。上控三川。旁聯七邑。風俗近陪于卜洛。山河旧壯于列京。[...] 朕以雜虜犯邊。天兵在野。盡護諸將。屬于長材。而宰以微恙所嬰。全師難進。[...] 而拭臨人著術。整眾有方。克樹休聲。允膺茂選。俾改轅于東夏。盛推轂于北門。<sup>476</sup>

However, despite all expectations, it seemed that Li Shi was not competent enough for the task after all. Li Ye, the other Tangut Bandit Suppression Commissioner of Dazhong 4 (850 CE), then serving as the “Military Commissioner of the Fengxiang Municipality 鳳翔節度

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<sup>474</sup> Mengjin 盟津 was located in present-day Mengjin 孟津, Henan province. It was a strategic ferry crossing on the Yellow River situated on the borderland between the Hedong Circuit and the Eastern Capital area.

<sup>475</sup> The three rivers mostly likely refer to the He 河 (i.e. the Yellow River), Luo 雒 and Yi 伊. It is not entirely clear which seven cities the text was referring to.

<sup>476</sup> Literary Garden of Luxuriant Beauty 文苑英華 (S186), f456, 2a-3a.

使”, succeeded Li Shi as the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit in the following year, presumably for his effectiveness in dealing with the Tanguts rebellions and the strategic importance of Hedong.<sup>477</sup> Although dismissed from the post due to faction conflicts, Li Ye was remembered for his contributions in handling the border crisis for a long time to come.<sup>478</sup>

It was already apparent in the time of Amoghavajra that Mount Wutai with its principal deity, Mañjuśrī was regarded as having special potency and protective powers in strategic wars. This reputation was further consolidated through the turmoil of the mid- and late- Tang period, when the sacred site was frequented by powerful military officials in control of the contested area. As remarked by Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842 CE) in his oft-cited passage about the different Buddhist specializations of the different mountain sites of China, “People of the north excel in military force. For controlling this, nothing is equal to the manifestation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in this world. Therefore, those who speak of extraordinary powers take Mount Qingliang (i.e. Mount Wutai) as a place of

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<sup>477</sup> Zhou Weizhou 2006.

<sup>478</sup> According to Huang Lou, there are conflicting records concerning Li Ye’s tenure as the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit. The *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* 資治通鑑 painted Li Ye as a recalcitrant general, stating that in Dazhong 6 (852 CE), because Li Ye allowed militants to abuse the Tangut populace and slaughter peaceful migrants, “the Northern border became restless (北邊擾動)”, and revolts seemed primed to break out at any moment. Emperor Xuanzong commissioned Lu Jun 盧鈞 (778-864 CE) to take over for Li Ye, with Lu Jun being able to quell the trends of rebellion and restore peace. However, according to the *New Official History of the Five Dynasties* 新五代史, Emperor Xizong 僖宗 (r. 873-888 CE), the grandson of Emperor Xuanzong, was still grateful for Li Ye’s handling of the northern border crisis, and offered his son Li Jun 李鈞 high military positions in his honor. Through careful reexamination of texts and contexts, Huang Lou has made a convincing case that the accusation against Li Ye was resulted from faction conflicts. See Huang Lou 2011, 147-158.



ancestry.”<sup>479</sup> It was also an observed tradition for Military Commissioners of the Hedong Circuit to visit the sacred site in searching for auspicious omens, and once their wish was granted, they reported what they saw to please the emperor:

The Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit Pei Du memorialized to the throne that auspicious clouds were seen above the Foguangsi of Mount Wutai. Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī appeared in the sky riding a lion, together with tens of thousands [of Buddhist deities]. The Emperor then dispatched commissioners to present offerings to the tens thousand Bodhisattvas. On the same day, auspicious clouds appeared again above the monastery [of Foguangsi].

河東節度使裴度奏。五臺山佛光寺慶雲見。文殊大士乘獅子於空中。從者萬眾。上遣使供萬菩薩。是日復有慶雲見於寺中。<sup>480</sup>

As a contemporary of Liu Yuxi, Pei Du 裴度 (765-839 CE), who was the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit from Tianbao 天寶 14 to Changqing 長慶 2 (819-822 CE), exemplified such piety from military officials. Judged by the response from Emperor Muzong who sent Offering Deliverance Commissioner to Foguangsi when informed about the miraculous revelations, the court also recognized the potency of Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī.

It is quite possible that the restoration of the Buddha Hall during the Dazhong era was initiated in a similar context. During this time, Foguangsi was under the supervision of Yuancheng, whose biography also alludes to military accomplishments as the major reason behind the bestowments of imperial favors:

When the Li [imperial] family occupied the entire “Bing Gateway” (i.e. Bing

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<sup>479</sup> “Stele Inscription for the Tang Dynasty Vinaya Master from Tangxingsi of the Marchmount Heng in Xiangtan 唐故衡嶽律大師湘潭唐興寺儼君碑”. Translation after James Robson 2009, 308-309.

<sup>480</sup> *Record of the Orthodox Lineage of the Patriarchs since the Buddha* 佛祖統紀 (T49n2035), 0384b.

Prefecture), offerings was made to Mañjuśrī from afar, and [an esteemed person] personally travelled to the sacred land. Upon seeing [Yuancheng's] esteemed presence, [the visitor] clasped his hand in admiration. A memorial was sent to the Son of Heaven of the Tang dynasty, and subsequently [Yuancheng] was bestowed the [honorific status of] Yuanxiang and the title of Chief Officer of the Mountain Gate. 後李氏奄有並門。遐奉文殊。躬遊聖地。睹其令範。撫手愜懷。表聞唐天子。相繼乃賜大師號圓相也。就加山門都檢校。<sup>481</sup>

It appears that an unidentified high official surnamed Li, who presumably contributed to the securing of the Bing Prefecture, the “northern gateway” of the Tang Empire, travelled to Mount Wutai and made offerings to Mañjuśrī. He also met with Yuancheng in person, and later appealed for his promotion.

The unidentified official was most likely Li Ye, who served as the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit in Dazhong 5-6 (851-852 CE). As someone deeply associated with the eunuch fraction at Emperor Xuanzong's court,<sup>482</sup> Li Ye's connection would also explain the involvement of Wang Yuanyou, the prominent Commandant of the Right Army and Commissioner of Merit and Virtue, promoted to the position around the same time in Dazhong 5-6 (851-852 CE) during one of the most intensified Tang-Tangut conflicts.<sup>483</sup> In fact, it has been noted that many of the military generals that served the Hedong region was backed by eunuch officials.<sup>484</sup> In addition, the Army of Divine Strategy

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<sup>481</sup> *Song Biographies* (T50n2061), 0883b

<sup>482</sup> Huang Lou 2011, 147-158.

<sup>483</sup> It corresponds to the timeline well that the project was completed in Dazhong 9-10 (855-856 CE), which took a reasonable three or four years.

<sup>484</sup> It appears that the eunuchs asserted great influence over the placement of military generals in regions to the north and west of Chang'an. The aforementioned Military Commissioner of Hedong Circuit, Wang Zai, was reportedly promoted to the position due to his eunuch ties. Perhaps because of their interests in this area, the eunuchs were the most actively involved in handling the Tangut crisis. Many of the rising military elites partook in the Tangut campaign led their career path through the Hedong region sooner or later. Bi Xian, for

having special “Mobile Brigades 行營” operating to the west and north of the capital area serves as the most explicit display of the power of the eunuch faction and their key roles in resolving the Tang-Tangut conflicts behind the curtains.<sup>485</sup>

With the connections between the eunuch faction and the Buddhist clergy, it is only natural that the military generals also became major patrons at Mount Wutai. As we have already seen from the inscriptions at the Buddha Hall and on the sūtra-pillar, in addition to Li Ye, Yuancheng had close cooperation with two other Military Commissioners of the Hedong Circuit, Zheng Juan and Bi Xian. The imperial patronage at Foguangsi remained along the lines of seeking protective powers of Buddhism during warfare, and was built on an intimate network of eminent monks, military generals and powerful eunuchs. As Wang Yuanyou ultimately became one of the benefactors at Foguangsi, it is not surprising then, that the votive inscription at the Buddha Hall specifically mentioned the hope that “the arms will be at rest” within the empire.

It is still worth noting that the restoration project of the Buddha Hall was extraordinary in mobilizing both imperially commissioned officials and local bureaucrats to contribute to the cause. The direct knowledge and approval from the court was displayed by the involvement of “Offering Deliverance Commissioner from the Superior Capital”. While the imperial commissioners for the Golden Pavilion were successively filled by

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example, before taking charge of the Hedong Circuit, rendered great service against a Tangut uprising in Dazhong 6 (852 CE) as the “Military Commissioner of Binning 邠寧節度使”.

<sup>485</sup> Prominent officials involved in the Tangut campaign such as the aforementioned Liu Zhuan and Bai Minzhong, cooperated with Mobile Brigades. It should be noted that Liu Zhuan also served in the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit position.

monks, including Daohuan and Huixiao,<sup>486</sup> in the case of the Foguangsi Buddha Hall, Ning Gongyu, a female devotee, was the commissioner acting on behalf of the court in Chang'an. However, we may recall that in proposing the building of the Golden Pavilion, Amoghavajra suggested none other than Emperor Daizong himself could lead the effort as the "Benefactor of the Pavilion". In contrast, the "Benefactors of the Buddha Hall" of Foguangsi were the abbot monk Yuancheng and the imperial commissioner Ning Gongyu. This may reflect a difference in the funding schemes of these two official projects as well as the financial reality of the time.

Large-scale Buddhist revitalization projects directly sponsored by the court were no longer mentioned in records beyond the first year of Emperor Xuanzong's reign, whereas local Buddhist patronage was encouraged. According to an edict issued in Dazhong 5 (851 CE):

In the first month [of Dazhong 5 (851 CE)], an edict proclaimed that if gentries and commoners from the Capital City or other commanderies and counties wish to establish monasteries, [their] local communities and villages shall not pose any obstructions. [They] would also be allowed to give tonsure to monks and nuns, and to oversee building projects.

[大中]五年正月詔。京畿及郡縣士庶。要建寺宇。村邑勿禁。兼許度僧尼。住持營造。<sup>487</sup>

It seems that the withholding of official building activities was caused by the incessant warfare on borderlands and the subsequently lacking of government budgets:

In the seventh month of the same year (851 CE), Grand Councilors [sent up a

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<sup>486</sup> *Collection of Memorials* (T52n2120), 0834a.

<sup>487</sup> *Collected Documents of Tang* (S81), f48, 19a.

memorial], stating that while Your Majesty admires and reveres Buddhism, and His vassals were willing to work for Him vigorously, [we were] worried that the gentries and commoners did not have sufficient wealth or source to offer support. [In this regard, His vassals might] trouble the population and cause distances. [We] hope that the Senior Subalterns of both Capital Areas and all prefectures and municipalities could be put in supervision of [Buddhist] affairs, who would then practice economy and send requests accordingly. Large-scale constructions should be advised against, so that the people would not be forced to labor. [...We also] hope that building of Buddhist buildings in towns and villages could be postponed until the arms are put to rest.

其年七月。宰臣奏。陛下崇奉釋教。臣子皆願奔走。慮士庶等物力不逮。擾人生事。望令兩畿及州府長吏。與審度事宜。撙節聞奏。不必廣為建造。驅役黎甿。[...] 其村邑佛堂。望且待兵罷建置為便。<sup>488</sup>

On the seventeenth day of the tenth month, Grand Councilors and others sent up [a memorial], stating that recently, an imperial edict was issued that promised that the reinstallations of Buddhist halls and monasteries would be permitted once the war was over. [We fear that] once the disturbances at the boarder were put down, petitions [for building Buddhist monasteries] would start rolling in. If rules were not laid down in advance, [such petitions] would be hard to prevent when things come to a head. Prostrating [ourselves] to the ground, the Buddhist teachings had always valued the authentic and the orthodox. People's respect towards [Buddhism] will only increase when it was held to the highest standards. Now the newly added monasteries in prefectures and municipalities were yet to be completed. If the commoners wish to pay veneration [to the Buddha], [they] should contribute their efforts towards these shared courses. Senior Subalterns should make this clear if there were people who wish to request establishments of more Buddhist monastics. When all [warfare] came to an end, it is possible to given considerations toward adding one more [Buddhist] establishment in major counties in remote locations of Yun prefecture. Buddhist monasteries should not be added in any other village or ward due to the limitations. A draft edict [reflecting the above suggestions] was approved.

十月十七日。宰臣等上言。近有敕許罷兵役後建置佛堂蘭若。若今邊事寧息。必恐奏請繼來。若不先議條流。臨事恐難止約。伏以釋門之教。本貴正真。奉之精嚴。則人用加敬。今諸州府寺宇新添。功悉未畢。百姓等若志願崇奉。則宜並力同修。自今已後。有請置佛堂蘭若者。望所在長吏。分明曉示。待一切

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<sup>488</sup> *Collected Documents of Tang* (S81), f48, 19a-19b.

畢後。或有雲州府遠處大縣。即許量事建置一所。其餘村坊。不在更置佛堂蘭若限。制可。<sup>489</sup>

Therefore, the last documented major building activity at Foguangsi during the Tang dynasty was undertaken against the concerns of excessive Buddhist spending. Through my above analyses of its building patronage, it is clear that the renovation of the main Buddha Hall rested in line with other highly symbolic Buddhist projects to strengthen military legitimacy through association with the spiritual power of Mount Wutai and its principle deity Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

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<sup>489</sup> *Collected Documents of Tang* (S81), f48, 19b.

## CONCLUDING NOTES: SACRED MOUNTAINS AND GREAT MONASTERIES AS AGENCIES OF THE EMPIRE

As a sacred space had been constructed to serve political purposes, Mount Wutai would in turn receive royal patronage and become increasingly powerful, eventually being transformed into a religious-cum-cultural icon and being evoked to sanctify its later replicas and polities who built and sought to scrounge its influence. By late-Tang period, Mount Wutai has already attracted numerous pilgrims under official and imperial missions, from within the state and abroad. For instance, in Dunhuang Cave 61, a mural of Mount Wutai depicts “Imperial Commissioners of Offering Deliverance 送供天使”, “Offering Deliverance Commissioners from Hunan 湖南送供使”,<sup>490</sup> “Offering Commissioners from Silla 新羅送供使”, and “Envoys dispatched by the King of Koryŏ 高麗王使”,<sup>491</sup> and when access to the actual Mount Wutai became difficult or impossible due to geographic or political barriers, replications or recreated miniature versions of the site became popular alternatives.

Scaled-down replicas of the Wutai Mountains were built, notably in South China, with the earliest ones dating to late Tang and Song dynasty period. There were at least three such models. The monk Baoan built a miniature Mount Wutai prior to the Huichang

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<sup>490</sup> Sun Xiusheng dated the event to 947 CE by comparing the image with extant records, and concluded that the commissioners were sent by the court of the Ma-Chu 馬楚 Kingdom (907-951 CE), located in the Hunan region, which existed during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period (Sun Xiushen 1998, 5-6).

<sup>491</sup> For supporting records and iconographical discussion of the Silla and Koryŏ missions, see Zhang Xihou 2001, 526-541 and Li Xin 2013, 25-32. Japan, Turfan and Tangut Kingdoms also sent envoys to Mount Wutai.

Persecution at the Lingguangsi 靈光寺 of Jiahe 嘉禾, present-day Jiaxing 嘉興 of the Zhejiang 浙江 province. A miniature Mount Wutai was built by the Imperial Wang family during the Five Dynasties period at Mount Wushi 烏石山, located in present-day Fuzhou 福州, Fujian 福建 province. Records also mentioned a third Mount Wutai modeled at the Zhending municipality 真定府, in the current Hebei province.<sup>492</sup> Unfortunately, none of them was preserved.

The Liao court created its own “Mount Wutai (a.k.a. East Wutai 東五臺)” in present day Yu County 蔚縣 during the Tonghe 統和 era (983-1012 CE) when the original Wutai area was under the control of the Northern Song. Located in the same Taihang Mountain Range, the East Wutai was less than one hundred miles northeast of Mount Wutai just across the Song-Liao border, and the site is still known as the “Little Wutai 小五臺”.<sup>493</sup> According to the *History of the Liao* 遼史, both Emperors Shengzong 神宗 and Daozong 道宗 made imperial visits to the Jinhe Monastery 金河寺 (a.k.a. The Ten Monasteries of Jinhe 金河十寺) located there.<sup>494</sup> The Tangut Empire (a.k.a. Western Xia 西夏, or the Great State of White and High 白高大國) created “Mount Wutai (a.k.a. North Wutai 北五臺)”, at the current day Baisi Valley 拜寺溝 of the Helan Mountain Range 賀蘭山.<sup>495</sup> The “mountain monasteries of Wutai 五臺山寺” established at Baisi Valley,

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<sup>492</sup> Lin Yun-jo 2014b, 125-129.

<sup>493</sup> Xiao Cun 1984, 90-91 and Du Doucheng 1991, 123-125.

<sup>494</sup> For archeological remains of the Jinhe Monastery, see Lei Shenglin 1995, 64-69.

<sup>495</sup> Shi Jinbo pointed out a so-called “Mountain Monastery of Wutai 五臺山寺” was recorded in the “西夏地形圖” section of the *Complete Historical Records of the Western Xia* 西夏紀事本末. Furthermore, a monastery designated as the “[Great] Qingliang Monastery of the North Wutai Mountains 五臺山[大]清涼寺” appeared in the colophon of *Collection of Esoteric Dharani for Perfection of the Courses of Rebirth* 密



including a knock-off version of the Qingliang Monastery 清涼寺, enjoyed patronage from the Tangut imperial family.<sup>496</sup>

Silla 新羅's Mount Wutai, located in present day Kangwŏn province 江原道 of North Korea, was known to us thanks to the *Residual Events of the Three Kingdoms* 三國遺事, and its establishment was attributed to the eminent monk Jajang 慈藏 (590-658 CE), who travelled to Tang China in Zhenguan 12 (641 CE).<sup>497</sup> Japan recreated Mount Wutai and famous Wutai monasteries at multiple locations. Chōnen, who travelled to China during the Northern Song period, and returned to Japan to establish its own Mount Wutai at Mount Atago 愛宕山 (var. 愛太子山) in the Kyōto region. The Five Peaks at Mount Atago were believed to be “imitations of the Mount Wutai of the Great Tang”, and “each year, for the protection of the state, offerings were made to the secret treasures of Mañjuśrī at the Jingūji 神宮寺”.<sup>498</sup>

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咒圓因往生集 and an inscription found at Mogao Cave 444 at Dunhuang. Shi believed Tangut had made a replica of Mount Wutai at the Helan Mountain Rang within its kingdom, and further suggested the location of this Wutai Mountain Monastery to be in the Baisi Valley of the Helan Mountains (Shi Jinbo 1988, 118-119). Yang Fuxue believed the intensified relation between the Tangut kingdom and Song dynasty directly resulted Tangut's creation of its own Mount Wutai (Yang Fuxue 2010, 18). Sun Changsheng brought our attention to a group of architectural remains at the Baisi Valley and suggested the Wutai Monastery to be referring to a group of monasteries (Sun Changsheng 1997, 59).

<sup>496</sup> This was confirmed by the discovery of a Da'an 大安 2 (1075 CE) inscription recorded on a central pillar of a Buddhist pagoda at Baisi Valley, stating its construction under imperial decree and its dedication to the state and the imperial family (Sun Changsheng 1997, 55-56)

<sup>497</sup> Jajang has a biography in the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*, which does not mention his visit to Mount Wutai. Du Doucheng believes the legend of Silla's Mount Wutai fabricated Jajang's involvement in order to legitimize its existence (Du Doucheng 1991, 125-128; cf. Kim Pok-sun 1996, 11-37; and Saitō Tadashi 1998, 144-147).

<sup>498</sup> The quoted passage was from a Kōwa 康和 5 (1103 CE) memorial, collected in the *Comprehensive Record of Court and Countryside* 朝野群載. The association between Mount Atago and Mount Wutai was also mentioned in the mid-Heian 平安 period text, *Records of Retribution Stories of Dharma's Blossom of the Great Kingdom of Japan* 大日本国法華經驗記. See Saitō Tadashi 1998, 158-159; Du Doucheng 1991,

Texts and visuals played important roles in propagating the imperial agendas of Mount Wutai. It is no coincidence that the two earliest Mount Wutai gazetteers were both commissioned under Empress Wu's political influence, and the *Brief Record* would set the precedent for the series of mountain gazetteers to come. Ennin, when travelling in China in the mid-ninth century, obtained copies of the *Brief Record* and included it in his catalogues.<sup>499</sup> The travel notes of another Japanese monk Jōjin, who visited Mount Wutai during the Northern Song dynasty, mentions Yanyi's *Expanded Record* and recalled meeting with him briefly at Mount Wutai.<sup>500</sup>

Although not many details are known about the “small painting (小帳)” of Mount Wutai produced by Huize, it was believed to be the precursor to the paintings and murals depicting “Panoramas of Mount Wutai” that emerged during the Tang. The potency of Mount Wutai was believed to manifest itself in these images, which became important acquires of envoys. A request from Turfan 吐蕃 Kingdom for the “Panoramas of Mount Wutai (五臺山圖)” was documented in Changqing 長慶 4 (821 CE).<sup>501</sup> Decades later, the

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128-131. Du Doucheng offered a different account concerning Chōnen's effort in establishing Mount Wutai in Japan, but did not provide reference to any primary or secondary sources.

<sup>499</sup> Recorded in the Catalogue of [the Artifacts, Text, etc., Acquired during] the Journey in Search of the Dharma from Japan to the Tang in the Fifth Year of the Jōwa Era 日本國承和五年入唐求法目錄 (T55n2165), and the Catalogue of Sacred Teachings Newly Sought in the Tang 入唐新求聖教目錄 (T55n2167), and the Catalogue of [the Artifacts, Text, etc.] Sought and Sent back by the Great Master Jikaku in the Tang 慈覺大師在唐送進錄 (a.k.a. 天台法華宗請益圓仁法師且求所送法門曼荼羅並外書等目錄, T55n2166). Ennin collected over 500 fascicles of texts, including the Brief Record of Mount Qingliang, which was recorded in all three catalogues. In the last catalogue listed above, an alternative title, Record of the Great Avatamsaka Monastery 大華嚴寺記, was recorded. This text, however, did not survive in Japanese repositories either. The historical circumstances behind the compilation of Brief Record are very significant, and will soon be discussed in detail.

<sup>500</sup> Wang Liping annot. 2009.

<sup>501</sup> *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f17-1, 8a and f196-2, 33b; *Archival Palace as the Great Oracle* 冊府元龜

Japanese monk envoy Ennin recorded in his travelogue the commission of the “Transformation Image of Mount Wutai 五臺山化現圖” in Kaicheng 開成 5 (839 CE). This type of images remained popular throughout the Medieval China.<sup>502</sup>

It is almost certain that there were other related materials circulating among the traveling monks and pilgrims that added to the spread of Mount Wutai’s fame, such as small iconographic drawings and woodcut prints depicting the Five Peaks or Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.<sup>503</sup> (Figure 7) However, nothing can be compared with the power of persuasiveness built into sacred architecture and landscape serving as political symbols. A case in point is the replication of the Mahabodhi Temples in Beijing, Kōkeqota, Bagan, Chiang mai, and other places in East and Southeast Asia along with productions of its miniature models<sup>504</sup> when the changing geopolitical landscapes of Asia over the centuries made pilgrimage to the sacred site of Bodh Gaya in north India increasingly difficult.

Similarly, the great monasteries of Wutai also served as powerful and symbolic models. In Japan, the so-called “Bamboo Grove Monastery of Mount Wutai 五臺山竹林寺” still stands today at Kōchi 高知. Its establishment was said to be a result of Emperor Shōmu 聖武天皇 (701-756 CE)’s miraculous dream, in which he travelled to Mount Wutai

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(S135), f999, 24a. See also, Du Doucheng 1991, 111-112, and Zha Luo 1998, 95-101. For the “Pictures of Mount Wutai” murals produced under Turfan rule at Dunhuang Grotto, see Zhao Xiaoxing 2010, 118-126.

<sup>502</sup> “Pictures of Mount Wutai” has become a complex subject of study in and of itself to date. For the latest synthesis of previous scholarship, see Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 175-193.

<sup>503</sup> Raoul Birnbaum 1983, 19-25. See my discussion in the section “Physical Topography and Mythical Landscape” in Appendix A of this thesis.

<sup>504</sup> Isabelle Charleux 2006, 120-142; Frederick M. Asher 2012, 75.

in China and paid reverence to Mañjuśrī.<sup>505</sup> The well-known Kinkakuji 金閣寺 (a.k.a. Rokuonji 鹿苑寺) in Kyōto was named after the Jin'gesi 金閣寺 on Mount Wutai. Its patron Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358-1408 CE) known by the title “Gen Dōgi, King of Japan 日本国王源道義”, even adopted the name of Dōgi 道義 (i.e. Daoyi) and appropriated his legend of entering the Conjured Golden Pavilion.<sup>506</sup> It was believed that by building a Golden Pavilion of his own, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu wished to tap the protective powers of this religiously-charged monument to aid his ambitious career as a Shogun.<sup>507</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> Based on textual survey, Saitō Tadashi believes the monastery was indeed founded during the Heian 平安 period (794-1192 CE), and its construction may have been associated with Saichō 最澄 (a.k.a. Master Dengyō 伝教大師; 766-822 CE) and Ennin (Saitō Tadashi 1998, 152-158).

<sup>506</sup> For discussions of various legends about conjured visionary monasteries of Mount Wutai, see Susan Andrews 2004, id. 2011, 134-162, and id. 2012.

<sup>507</sup> Ashikaga Yoshimitsu originally had the Buddhist name Dōyū 道有, but he intentionally changed it into Dōgi 道義. For detailed discussion of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's construction of Kinkakuji, see Yutani Yūzō 2012, 305-332.

## **PART II**

### **ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF FOGUANGSI FROM THE TANG**

### CHAPTER 3 LANDSCAPING THE MOUNTAIN MONASTIC TRADITION

The overall landscaping of Foguangsi is extraordinary. In the 1944-45 CE field report, Liang Ssu-ch'eng described the lofty setting of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi thusly:

The monastic complex lies along the cliffs, with its main hall occupying the highest terrain overlooking the courtyard. [...] With a rapid rise of landscape, a broad terrace was built against the mountain slope as the foundation for the main hall, measuring approximately 12 to 13 meters in height, [...so high that] a complete view of the hall can barely be seen from the front of the terrace. The back of the hall joins the mountain slope with scarcely any margin of space.<sup>508</sup>

伽藍依巖而置，正殿踞於高台之上，俯臨庭院，[...] 地勢陡起，依山築牆成廣台，高約十二、三公尺，即為正殿之基。[...] 殿之立面，惟在台上可得全貌。台以上，殿後近接山巖，幾無隙地。<sup>509</sup>

When the Cultural Relics Investigation Team of the Yanbei Region revisited the monastery in 1950 CE, this overall landscape had barely changed. However, they noted in their report that the Buddha Hall had been under the influence of mountain streams, to the degree that the rear side of its platform was buried under mud, and that the foundation had been affected by severe sedimentation.<sup>510</sup> According to the keeper of the site, a debris flow caused by heavy rainfall had occurred since the investigation team left. It eroded the rear wall and destroyed some of the Ming dynasty sculptures inside the hall. Consequently, the rock face of the mountain slope that almost joins with the building at its back was chiseled back several meters, and the rear wall was rebuilt in a restoration effort. Nevertheless, at

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<sup>508</sup> Translation modified after Vimalin Rujivacharakul and Luo Deyin eds. 2014, 43, 48, and Marilyn M. Rhie 1970, 6.

<sup>509</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944, 17.

<sup>510</sup> Zhao Zhengzhi 1951, 181.

the current site, the original position of the east cliff can still be traced by marks left on the exposed bedrock behind the Buddha Hall.<sup>511</sup> (Figures 8)

In addition to the extraordinary mountainous setting against a steep cliff, Liang Ssu-ch'eng took note of the use of natural rock as column platforms in the interior of the Buddha Hall. We are informed by our subsequent investigations, in addition to the column platforms, that the Buddhist altar housed inside the hall was also sculpted directly out of live rock of the mountain.<sup>512</sup> However, despite the use of rock-cut elements was described as “quite interesting”, Liang believed such a treatment was merely a “measure of expediency”.<sup>513</sup> I argue that this feature of Foguangsi Buddha Hall is in fact quite significant and meaningful, especially examined in the wider study of religious space used by Chinese Buddhists. Conventionally, scholars have adhered to a two-category classification in order to understand Buddhist architecture, namely the “cave temples” and

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<sup>511</sup> The Patriarch Pagoda was also placed close to the cliff, and it had escaped the attention of previous reports that the pagoda shared the same bedrock foundation with the neighboring Buddha Hall. If the northern section of the cliff behind the Buddha Hall was not removed in 1950s CE due to the debris flow, the rugged rock face behind the pagoda would have extended continuously throughout the entire width of the terraced ground.

<sup>512</sup> The bedrock on which the Buddha Hall is located is mostly composed of metamorphic mafic rock with a green hue. This kind of unique metamorphic mafic rock was first identified by Ferdinand von Richthofen, and introduced as the “green schist (绿泥片岩)” of the “Wutai Group (五臺群)” (Ferdinand von Richthofen 1882; Zhang Shouxin 2009, 1202). Its formation is considered a major geologic feature of the Wutai area, since it displays characteristics of the “Greenstone Belt” from the Archean eon, the oldest rock formation exposed on the surface of the Earth, from 2.5 billion years ago. Recent surveys by the Huanzhong Geotechnical Investigation Co., Ltd., of Taiyuan 太原环中岩石勘察有限公司, reported the bedrock as the “Hongmen Type (鸿门组)” of metamorphic rock, belonging to the “Taihuai Group (台怀群)” under the “Upper Archean Wutai Super-Group (上太古界五台超群)”. Survey results were included an unpublished 2005 report.

<sup>513</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944, 29.

the “surface monasteries”.<sup>514</sup> This classification contradicted “stone” versus “wood” regarding building materials, as well as the difference between “carving into mountainsides” versus “building from group up” in construction technique. However, this dichotomy overlooked the fact that excavated caves often coexisted with timber structures, whereas constructed monasteries were sometimes intentionally juxtaposed with rock-cut elements. The Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, for example, would not fall neatly in either category. While the main structure of the hall was constructed with timber, the exposed bedrock that served as the altar, together with the building platform set into the cliff face, were directly hewed out from the mountain on which the entire monastic complex is situated.

In this chapter, the symbolic significance of constructing Buddhist monasteries on mountains and carving altars and platforms out of the bedrock is examined in historical context. I argue that instead of adhering to the “cave temples” and the “surface monasteries” dichotomy essentially based on building materials, the foremost factor that shaped the early development of Buddhist space in China is the nature of different locations, which could either be “hegemonic” (metropolitan) or “heterotopic” (mountainous). Before diving deeper into this argument, however, I first offer a synthesis of the latest studies on the comparable topic of grotto sites and freestanding temples concerning the religious architecture of the Indic world. I then turn to a brief outline of the

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<sup>514</sup> This is exemplified by a recent article by Li Yuqun in the “Handbook of Oriental Studies Series”, see Li Yuqun 2009 b, 575-738.



shift from urban to mountain monasticism in China, in order to further understand the developments of its related architectural practices, leading to the extraordinary case of Foguangsi on Mount Wutai.

## **MOUNTAIN TEMPLES AND TEMPLE MOUNTAINS OF THE INDIC WORLD**

The practice of excavated mountain sanctuaries in India dates to at least the third century BCE, during the time of King Aśoka of the Maurya dynasty. By that time, a reaction towards the Vedic order, the withdrawing of oneself to achieve “freedom”, was a shared idea in almost all types of Indian asceticism, with these dwellings in mountains and forests serving as a heterotopic space between civilization and its antithesis. Previously seen as occupied by supernatural beings in Brahmanic epic literature and mythology, the space offered a “heterotopia” and fulfilled the geographic connotations of renunciation.<sup>515</sup> The earliest extant examples are single cells for monks, forest ascetics, and the like that were located in the suburban areas. For instance, at the Barābar Hills in the state of Bihar, four caves were excavated into the face of a low outcrop of granite. (Figure 9) Two of the caves featured hut-shaped chambers that were sculptured out of the rock matrix, approached through rectangular front chambers.<sup>516</sup> These huts were believed to be a

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<sup>515</sup> The Rigvedic period practices in asceticism and renunciation had become part of a doctrinal conception by the sixth century BCE, when great social changes were taking place in India, which Louis Dumont calls the “age of *vairagya* (renunciation)”, marked by the predominance of Ājīvika, Jaina, and Buddhist asceticism (Kazi K. Ashraf 2002, 4-5; id. 2013, 24-28, and 34-38).

<sup>516</sup> Three of the four caves at the Barābar Hills, the Sudāma, the Karṇa Chopār and the Viśvāmitra, had inscriptions that point to dates around the mid-third century BCE during the Aśoka Maurya. The unfinished Lomās Ṛṣi cave does not bear any inscriptions, but is generally believed to be from the same period. At the nearby Nāgārjuni Hill, inscriptions confirmed excavation activities sponsored by Aśoka’s grandson, Dasaratha. See John Huntington 1974, 34-56.

glorifying “momentalization” of the kind of elementary architecture used by hermits that has been long lost.

With imperial patronage, Buddhism soon emerged among other ascetic sects and became the dominant state religion from the second century BCE onwards, with the next stage of architectural development mainly documented by large numbers of rock-cut Buddhist monuments.<sup>517</sup> According to early Buddhist literature, the Buddha is referred to living under trees and in caves. In addition, the cave (Skt. *guhā*) was one of the five dwelling types sanctioned by the Buddha, which may have been used as shelters during the rain retreat that played a major role in the transition from the eremitical to the coenobitical manner of life.<sup>518</sup> As Kazi K. Ashraf has pointed out, “[i]f Buddhism and its various practices are ascetical in nature, dwelling is a key locus in that tradition”, and the Buddha’s teachings, such as encouraging his disciples to live under trees or in caves, may have poised a dilemma between the requisite ascetical practices and the increasingly elaborate monastic architecture.<sup>519</sup> Grand assembly halls (Skt. *chaityas*) had façades modeled after

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<sup>517</sup> Some Jaina sites were preserved from this period as well, such as the Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves in Odisha mentioned in note 519 below.

<sup>518</sup> It is generally recognized that permanent monasteries may have emerged from taking temporary shelter from the rain, since the ideal of a wandering and alms collecting life in India would be inevitably interrupted by the rainy season (Sukumar Dutt 1924, 123-127).

<sup>519</sup> See Kazi K. Ashraf 2002, 228-229. Single cells did co-exist with monastic courts during this later period of development. At Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves in Odisha, “[r]ock-cut architecture [...] initially ignores such a hypaethral complex, adapting wooden models to suit the natural stone in which the living quarters were encased. Cells either were scattered along the rock’s natural contours, or were combined in such complex, multi-storied apartment” (Michael W. Meister 1990, 219-225). However, this reminiscence from the ascetic period of Buddhism was rather scarce.

contemporary wooden palaces, and the rock-cut monastic residences (Skt. *vihāras*)<sup>520</sup> that emerged around the same time, with cells on four sides surrounding a central open court, were modeled after urban architecture as well.<sup>521</sup> Their connection with ideal of an ascetic life was still present in the mountainous settings, with the relation to the primitive cave shelter preserved through the construction medium of stone.

During the succeeding Gupta period, Brahmanical architecture emerged into full being in response to the challenges from non-Vedic systems. It was a period when various religious traditions overlapped artistically and technically, some even had interchanges between deities and icons. Temples were erected using a great diversity of forms and styles, and the earliest ones from the early fifth century CE. Some temples, like the ones found at Udayagiri near Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, clearly expressed links to earlier cave hermitages. Although constructed porticos had started to appear,<sup>522</sup> these temples still had sanctuaries carved into the prepared rock face of a mountain ridge, with altars or even primary icons directly sculpted out of the mountain simultaneously with the excavation of their cave sanctuaries.<sup>523</sup> (Figure 10) Freestanding and “flat-roofed” masonry temples also emerged around this time, such as the Temple 17 at Sanchi, and the Kankali Devi Temple at

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<sup>520</sup> Note that both the terms had evolved historically. For instance, see later discussion on the term *vihāra*. Here I used them for specific meanings given in the parentheses.

<sup>521</sup> Percy Brown 1965, 5-6; Walter Sprink 1958, 95-104; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy 1992, 39-40; Michael W. Meister 2007, 5-9. A greater amount of Buddhist establishments that did not survive probably moved closer to the cities and villages on which they were dependent for alms. In the Gandhāra Region in Central Asia, excavation revealed two major types of monastic complexes as well, namely the quadrangular monasteries and mountain *vihāras* (Kurt A. Behrendt 2004, 33-38).

<sup>522</sup> Joanna G. Williams 1982, 88-89.

<sup>523</sup> For overall historical context and ritual usage of the site, cf. Michael D. Willis 2009.

Tigawa, both located in Madhya Pradesh. They were described as “constructed caves”, since their primary building material, stone, bore the symbolic significance of the presence of “mountains”. The symbolic effects of these temples were even compared to “the lofty peak of the mountain Kailāsa” or “as lofty as the peak of a hill and bearing the luster of the moon” in contemporary inscriptions.<sup>524</sup>

Later comers to the scene, Hindu temples nonetheless started taking over the temple landscape in India with their pronounced mountain analogy. Ananda K. Commaraswamy has pointed out the “far-reaching exegesis” of the cave as it integrated into the Vedic/Brahmanical world-view.<sup>525</sup> As Michael W. Meister has observed, “the metaphor of temple as mountain runs throughout India’s tradition of buildings”, explaining that the Hindu temples are often seen as mountains with a womb-like cave.<sup>526</sup> From the sixth century CE onward, this link between the temple and the mountain was experimented with a variety of ways. A temple at Badami, Karnataka, was constructed in the “flat-roofed” tradition and placed under a rock ledge. Carol Bolon suggests that the overhanging cliffs of the mountain acted as the *śikhara* for the temple.<sup>527</sup> The Pārvatī Temple at Nachna, Uttar Pradesh, probably had a superstructure, but its original contour has been lost.<sup>528</sup> Nevertheless, the elevated temple platform used blocks of stones that were intentionally rugged to resemble the surface of a mountain, with small caverns in which

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<sup>524</sup> John F. Fleet 1888, 44-45; cf. Michael W. Meister 2013, 129.

<sup>525</sup> Ananda K. Commaraswamy 1992.

<sup>526</sup> Michael W. Meister 2006, 26.

<sup>527</sup> Carol Bolon 1979, 255; cf. Michael W. Meister 2013, 129.

<sup>528</sup> George Michell 1988, 95-96.

relief images of mystic animals were nested.<sup>529</sup> Best known was the type of temple that developed a superstructure as its mountain-*śikhara*, exemplified by a temple in the Mukandara pass, Rajasthan, and the well-known temple at Deogarh, Madhya Pradesh.<sup>530</sup> Their superstructures were not preserved, but reconstructions based on pieces of their towers found nearby suggest that they were the precursors for the full-fledged Nāgara temples of north India.<sup>531</sup>

### EARLY CHINESE MONASTERIES AS AN URBAN PHENOMENON

Whereas the religious architecture of the Indic world originated in forests and mountains, in China, Buddhist space was first established in metropolitan areas before transmitting to mountain sites. It is evident from textual sources and archaeological evidence that when Buddhism was first transmitted to China during the Han dynasty,<sup>532</sup> portable objects including Buddhist icons and votive *stūpas*, quickly made their way into the Chinese visual repertoire.<sup>533</sup> Nevertheless, for a prolonged period, their impact on its native landscape was perhaps limited, mainly because travelling foreign monks tended to congregate in major cities,<sup>534</sup> and their religious and building practices were constrained by

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<sup>529</sup> Michael W. Meister 1986, 33-50.

<sup>530</sup> For instance, a sixth century Mandasor inscription describes a temple with “broad and lofty towers [and] (thus) resembles a mountain”.

<sup>531</sup> Michael W. Meister 1986, 33-50.

<sup>532</sup> Erick Zürcher 2007, 18-43.

<sup>533</sup> For some of earliest extant Buddhist objects found on the Chinese soil, see Marilyn M. Rhie 1999, 94-95, plates 1-3, figures 1.7, 1.9, 1.23, 1.24, 1.26 1.31, 1.32 and 1.34.

<sup>534</sup> As Zürcher has pointed out, “for all we know early Chinese Buddhism was from the outset a distinctly urban phenomenon” (Erick Zürcher 2007, 59).

the state.<sup>535</sup> These Buddhists were stationed at official bureaus, often engaged in *sūtra* translation projects assisted by Chinese clerks.<sup>536</sup> The term *si* (寺) for “government office” obtained strong Buddhist connotation that it eventually came to mean “monasteries”. While a monumental *stūpa* may have been added to convert a bureau for Buddhist use in some cases,<sup>537</sup> there is no clear documentation about changes made to the existing

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<sup>535</sup> Erick Zürcher 2007, 38-39. Official establishments aside, it had been suggested the monks probably lacked the financial support to establish their own monasteries. During the Han and Wei period, the derogatory term “begging barbarians (乞胡)” was used by Ji Kang 嵇康 (ca. 223- 262 CE) to address foreign monks who were dependent on alms, as seen in “Health Preservation Theory of Houses Having no Auspiciousness or Ominousness 宅無吉凶攝生論”, *Collection of Court Gentlemen Ji 嵇中散集* (S148). However, recent studies on a fragmented well ring inscription in Kharoṣṭhī scripts, dated to the Eastern Han period by Lin Meicun, suggest that there may be well-organized *saṅgha* (Buddhist communities) monasteries in Luoyang during the Eastern Han, which may suggest the existence of large-scaled monasteries (Lin Meicun 1989, 240-249).

<sup>536</sup> Fu Xi’nian mentioned a monastery built by the monk An Shigao 安世高, in Yuzhang 豫章 (present-day Nanchang 南昌, Jiangxi province), and introduced it as probably the first “unofficial” Buddhist establishment known to us (Fu Xi’nian ed. 2001, 156). However, the story was only mentioned in the hagiographies in *A Collection of Records on the Emanation of the Chinese Tripitaka* 出三藏記集 (T55n2145), 0095a-0095c, and the *Biography of Eminent Monks* (T50n2059), 0323a-0324b. Both sources are of relatively late date, compiled during the Southern dynasties, and the whole story seems to be apocryphal. Even the author Huijiao, while compiling his entry on An Shigao, noticed other contradictory theories concerning his activities in the South, and included these variations of the account in the *Biography of Eminent Monks*. In view of this, the legend of An Shigao’s monastery was probably a pious forgery.

<sup>537</sup> The best-known example is perhaps the Baimasi 白馬寺 or the “White Horse Monastery” at Luoyang, whose establishment is allegedly associated with the story of Emperor Ming 明帝 (28-75 CE)’s dream and the “initial transmission of Buddhism to China”. Chinese architectural historians often took a passage in the Preface to the *Sūtra of Forty-two Chapters* 四十二章經 (a similar passage also appeared in Mozi 牟子’s *Treatise on Removing Doubts* 理惑論, and cited by Sengyou 僧佑 in the *Collection for the Propagation and Clarification [of Buddhism]* 弘明集) as the canonical reference, which described the Baimasi as located outside the Xiyong Gate 西雍門 of Luoyang, with a three-storied *stūpa* decorated with murals. However, as H. Maspero, Tang Yongtong and Erick Zürcher have analyzed in detail, the story was not formulated until much later (probably during the second half of the third century CE), and is apocryphal in nature (for references to Maspero and Tang’s work and Zürcher’s further comments on Baimasi, see Erick Zürcher 2007, 21-22 and 31-32).

Lin Meicun argued that there might have been some historical truth to the Baimasi legend, since his study shows that Eastern Han already had sizable Buddhist communities and perhaps large monastic establishments. Lin pointed to a monastic compound outside the Xiyong Gate of Luoyang as possibly renovated based on an Eastern Han site. However, Lin also suggested the site could not be established as early as Emperor Ming, and may had a different name during the Eastern Han. Additionally, Lin directed our

architecture, or other buildings constructed for exclusive Buddhist purposes. In addition to *sūtra* translations that took place in *si* offices, Buddhist icons were already worshiped by the Eastern Han. Nevertheless, such religious performances were not introduced with any unique Buddhist buildings either, since the icons were simply housed in *ci* (祠), or conventional shrines,<sup>538</sup> and often placed together with indigenous deities. A well-known example was Emperor Huan 桓帝 (147-167 CE)’s “shrine for the Yellow Emperor [as a Daoist deity], Laozi, and the Buddha 黃老浮圖之祠” located in the imperial palace in Luoyang.<sup>539</sup>

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attention to sudden popularity of “White Horse” as names for monasteries, also used by the monastery located outside the Qing Gate 青門 at Chang’an, and another one built in Jianye during the Eastern Jin, and concluded the “White Horse” name was a post Western Jin coinage. Lin based on the record of a three-storied *stūpa* in *Notes on the Monasteries of Luoyang* 洛陽伽藍記, seen at Stone *Stūpa* Monastery 石塔寺 (l.k.a. Precious Light Monastery 寶光寺), also located outside the Xiyong Gate (then known as the Xiyang Gate 西陽門), and suggested it to be an Eastern Han site as well (Lin Meicun 1989, 240-249).

<sup>538</sup> Icon worship that appropriated *ci* shrines was usually held in official settings as well, if not imperial. In addition to the shrine of Emperor Huan introduced later, another example is the “*Stūpa* Shrine 浮圖祠” built by the warlord Ze Rong 笮融, around Chuping 初平 3 (192 CE) near Pengcheng 彭城 (perhaps in Xiapi 下邳, present-day western Shandong and northern Jiangsu provinces). Although Ze was not related to the imperial family, he was appointed as public official and his project still belonged to realm of governmental activities. See “Biography of Liu Yao 劉繇傳” in the *Book of Wu* 吳書 of *Records of the Three Kingdoms* 三國志 (S45), f4. It is interesting to note that during the Western Jin period when the story was first put together by Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297 CE), it seemed fine to use “shrines” to identify a Buddhist establishment. In a later recount of the story by Fan Ye 範曄 (398-445 CE) in the *Book of the Later Han* 後漢書 (S45), compiled under the State of Song of the Southern Dynasties, the name of the compound was changed from “*Stūpa* Shrine” to “*Stūpa* Monastery 浮屠寺”.

<sup>539</sup> “Biography of Xiang Kai 襄楷傳”, *Book of Later Han* (S45), f30. Lin Meicun believes the monastery was the one torn down by the Wei rulers (Lin Meicun 1989, 240-249). Tang Yongtong has noted that in Eastern Han, worship of Buddhist icons were often mentioned together with Daoist ones, and took place in the traditional *ci* shrines (Tang Yongtong 1938, 234-238). An earlier example is the Buddhist activities undertaken by the Prince of Chu 楚王, Liu Ying 劉英 (d. 71 CE), who was said to take deep interest in Daoism (黃老) while “fasting and sacrificing to the Buddha (為浮屠齋戒祭祀)”. See “Biographies of the Ten Princes during Emperor Guangwu’s Reign 光武十王列傳”, *Book of Later Han* (S45), f42. This observation also implies that icon halls made especially for Buddhist statues probably did not appear until much later.

During the Three Kingdoms period, the situation of Buddhist establishments under the northern Kingdom of Wei 魏 (220-265 CE) is not very clear due to a lack of reliable sources. In any case, monasteries probably remained under official administration in its capital city Luoyang.<sup>540</sup> For Buddhism in South China under the rules of the Wu 吳 rulers (220-284 CE), there were periods of growth as well as persecutions, nonetheless, it remained mostly “orientated towards the higher and highest strata of society, the government, or the court”.<sup>541</sup> Renowned monks may even occupied official positions. Another famous example among early monasteries, the Jianchusi 建初寺, or the “First Establishment Monastery”, was believed built by Kang Senghui 康僧會 (d. 280 CE) in Wu’s second capital city Jianye 建業 (near present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu province), some source says in Chiwu 赤烏 4 (241 CE), others in Chiwu 10 (247 CE).<sup>542</sup> Similar to the official *si* structures in the north, it was built under imperial patronage. Its architecture, which we do not know the specifics of, was probably not very different from palatial or official buildings.

The coming of the Western Jin 西晉 dynasty (265-317 CE) marked an important turn for the development of Buddhist architecture in China. The period witnessed a sudden

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<sup>540</sup> Erick Zürcher 2007, 55-57, 59.

<sup>541</sup> Erick Zürcher 2007, 47. Eminent monks active in the Wu State, including Zhi Qian and Kang Senghui, probably held official positions in the court of Sun Quan 孫權 (182-252 CE). Meanwhile, at least one instance of religious persecution took place according to the *Book of Wu* 吳書 or *Records of the Three Kingdoms* 三國志 (S45). It was waged by a member of the imperial family, general Sun Chen 孫綝 (231-258 CE), whose targets were not limited to Buddhist establishments.

<sup>542</sup> Both Tang Yongtong and Erick Zürcher noted the apocryphal nature of the Jianchusi legend (Tang Yongtong 1938, 135-136; Erick Zürcher 2007, 52-53).



flourishing of Buddhism in the north, especially in major cities along the Silk Road, owing to the reestablished connections with Central Asia.<sup>543</sup> Increased translation activities attested to an inflow of scriptures through international traffic, and eminent monks such as Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (b. ca. 233 CE) was said to have frequently travelled along the continental highway. However, there was still little information about the development of Buddhist art or architecture.<sup>544</sup> It is interesting to consider the passage from Dharmarakṣa's biography, which reads:

At that time, it was during the reign of Emperor Wu of Jin (r. 265-290 CE). Although for monasteries, temples, images and statues, [the style of] the capital [Luoyang] was the most admired, yet [when it comes to] the profound *vaipulya* [i.e. *Mahāyāna*] *sūtras*, [the canon] was confined to the Western regions.<sup>545</sup>  
是時晉武帝之世。寺廟圖像雖崇京邑。而方等深經蘊在西域。<sup>546</sup>

Although a later account written in the Southern Dynasties period, the purported *par excellence* status of Luoyang in building monasteries and making artifacts as well as its contrasting fervor for scriptures, offers a possible explanation for the neglect of art and architecture, and the overwhelming amount of attention paid to texts and translations until

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<sup>543</sup> Erick Zürcher 2007, 57-80.

<sup>544</sup> It was said that Dharmarakṣa “dwelled in seclusion deep in the mountains” during as a hermit during the reign of Emperor Wu, and later built a monastery outside the city of Chang'an in late third century. If these were authentic records, then Dharmarakṣa's monastery would be the earliest known project initiated by monks and funded by local communities. At the same time, Dharmarakṣa's years of seclusion and his choice for the location of the monastery started to show a withdrawal from the previously dominant urban setting. However, similar to the aforementioned problem concerning An Shigao's monastery (see note 536), the sources for these accounts were the compiled much later, seen in *A Collection of Records on the Emanation of the Chinese Tripitaka* (T55n2145), 0097c-0098b, and *Biography of Eminent Monks* (T50n2059), 0326c-0327a.

<sup>545</sup> Translation modified after Daniel J. Boucher, and for a complete translation with comments of Dharmarakṣa's biography, see Daniel J. Boucher 1996, 23-30.

<sup>546</sup> *A Collection of Records on the Emanation of the Chinese Tripitaka* (T55n2145), 0097c.

the end of the third century.<sup>547</sup>

#### **FROM METROPOLIS TO THE MOUNTAINS: THE RISE OF CONCENTRATIVE DWELLINGS**

There was yet another major reason that Buddhist establishments remain confined to the cities in its initial period of introduction.<sup>548</sup> Although there had been a long held notion of sacred mounts and cravens in traditional Chinese thought, building and residing in the mountains inside the caves maybe a later introduced concept. As Paul Demiéville and others have duly noted, prior to a shift in the perception of nature in China around the third century CE, mountains were generally seen belonging to the “landscape of fear”.<sup>549</sup> Horror and awe seemed to have overshadowed sublime wonder and religious reverence, as literary and artistic representations of mountains characterized exotic animals and noxious sprites as its occupants, with “entering the mountains” conceived as a daring enterprise often mentioned with warnings and terror.<sup>550</sup> With the introduction of mountain monasticism from India,<sup>551</sup> instead of perceiving mountains as the sacred adobes of demons and transcendents, “enchanted” but “haunted”, humans finally ventured into this transition zone. Buddhist establishments were freed from the previous framework of

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<sup>547</sup> As Zürcher has rightfully pointed out, “the history of the Buddhist Church before ca. 290 is still for ninety percent a history of translations” (Erick Zürcher 2007, 61).

<sup>548</sup> It is necessary to take a moment and explain the seeking for a source for this kind of religious mountain dwellings in the Indic practices, instead of traditional Chinese thoughts. To be distinguished from former notions of reclusion in court, etc. See Aat E. Vervoorn 1990; Alan J. Berkowitz 2000.

<sup>549</sup> Paul Demiéville 1987; James Robson 2009.

<sup>550</sup> Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-fang 1992; James M. Hargett 2007; James Robson 2009.

<sup>551</sup> “Monasticism” here is taken to mean the site of monasteries, including its natural and built environment. As James Robson has pointed out, it may be taken as one of the two related approaches to the study of monasteries, and is as important as the other approach to “monasticism”, which generally focuses on the community and the regulation of their activities within the monastery (James Robson 2010, 43-44).

Chinese architecture and urbanscape.

Not coincidentally, the corpse of fourth century Buddhist nature poetry accumulated to the fully developed poetic style of the celebrated poet Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433 CE), whose work marked the epitome of Chinese “landscape poetry”. Xie wrote in the “Rhapsody of Dwelling in the Mountains 山居賦” that:

Reverently I receive the testimony of the sages,	敬承聖誥。
And respectfully peer into scriptures from the past.	恭窺前經。
Mountain wilds are clear and boundless,	山野昭曠。
While settlements of men reek with the stench of sheep and fish.	聚落膻腥。
Therefore the all-embracing vow of great compassion,	故大慈之弘誓。
Saving the drowning state of teeming beings,	拯群物之淪傾。
Cannot be vainly uttered in crowded places,	豈寓地而空言。
But must be well fulfilled where resources abound.	必有貸以善成。
It rejoices in the flowering garden of Deer Park,	欽鹿野之華苑。
And admires the famous peak of the Spirit Vulture.	羨靈鷲之名山。
It aspires toward the pure grove of <i>śāla</i> trees,	企堅固之貞林。
And longs for the fragrant bower of Amrapāli.	希庵羅之芳園。
Though [the Buddha's] pure features are long removed,	雖粹容之緬邈。
It is said his voice is ever present.	謂哀音之恒存。
So they build a monastery on a secluded peak,	建招提於幽峰。
Hoping the wielders of the [monk's] staff may rest their shoulders.	冀振錫之息肩。
It may be Pradīparāja will present seats,	庶鐙王之贈席。
Or Gaṇḍhakūṭa graciously provide food;	想香積之惠餐。
For when phenomena are minimized, thoughts penetrate,	事在微而思通。
When the Noumenon is unsevered, it may be rewarmed. <sup>552</sup>	理匪絕而可溫。

Xie was noted for his spiritual background in Buddhism,<sup>553</sup> and the above rhapsody unmistakably drew inspirations from Buddhist thoughts to eulogize the “clear and boundless” of the wild in contrast to the crowded and dirty urban environment. The

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<sup>552</sup> Translation after Richard B. Mather 1958, 75-76.

<sup>553</sup> J. D. Frodsham 1960, 68-104.

monastery “on a secluded peak” he had envisioned further spoke for the rapid growth in contemporary establishments of mountain monasteries, on par with their metropolitan contemporaries.

In the above context, the Sixteen Kingdoms 十六國 (304-439 CE) and the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317-420 CE) saw the emergence of “*jingshe* (精舍)”, a term initially reserved for mountain monastic establishments, clearly differing from the adopted official monasteries (寺), or appropriated icon shrines (祠).<sup>554</sup> One exemplary record describes the monk Kang Sengyuan 康僧淵 (fl. 325-343 CE) and his *jingshe* beside a mountain range along the riverside:

Kang Sengyuan built a concentrative dwelling at Yuzang, 10 *li* away from the city walls. It was set beside the hills, and in vicinity of rivers. Fragrant trees lined up in the spacious yard, and clear streams washed ashore the halls. [He] dwelled there at ease, studied and lectured, and devoted his mind to the savoring of thoughts. The venerable Yu and others often travelled there to visit. [They] observed [Kang Sengyuan] practicing breathing techniques.

康僧淵在豫章。去郭數十里。立精舍。旁連嶺。帶長川。芳林列於軒庭。清流激於堂宇。乃閒居研講。希心理味。庾公諸人多往看之。觀其運用吐納。<sup>555</sup>

Since *jingshe* was a new concept for the heretofore-introduced Buddhist architectural types, a detailed explanation of the term is in order. Pointing to its counterpart in Sanskrit as “*vihāra*”, the term is often glossed as “monasteries” in modern Chinese Buddhist

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<sup>554</sup> The monk Boyuan 帛遠 (a.k.a. Fazhu 法祖) allegedly built a *jingshe* at Chang’an during the preceding Western Jin period. See *A Collection of Records on the Emanation of the Chinese Tripitaka* (T55n2145), 0107a-0107c, and *Biography of Eminent Monks* (T50n2059), 0327a-0327c. It could be the earliest extant record of Buddhist *jingshe* in the Chinese heartland, however, little information was provided for the architecture itself to facilitate any meaningful discussions. In any case, it was not until during the Sixteen Kingdoms and Eastern Jin period that this type of establishments started to rise to popularity.

<sup>555</sup> *A New Account of the Tales of the World* 世說新語, compiled by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444 CE).

dictionaries.<sup>556</sup> However, such a translation is inaccurate, especially for the early usage of the term.

According to etymologists, *vihāra* was essentially used to refer to a place, a space, or even an abstract position.<sup>557</sup> When referring to a physical structure, James Fergusson has further observed that the oldest *vihāras* were single-celled and suitable as residences for ascetics based on archaeological evidence.<sup>558</sup> Correspondingly, 2nd and third century translators used to simply render it as “shanty dwelling (廬舍)”. Since *vihāra* further implies a pleasure ground and local of creation, it was also translated as “place of recreation (遊行處)”.<sup>559</sup> As early as in the third century CE, *vihāra* was rendered with a family of similar terms including *jingshe*, or “concentrative dwelling”, “concentrative

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<sup>556</sup> According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, for example, “vihara” is an “early type of Buddhist monastery consisting of an open court surrounded by open cells accessible through an entrance porch.” (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/628714/vihara>)

<sup>557</sup> The concept of *vihāra* itself had layers of meanings and its architectural implication also undergone significant changes in its Sanskrit context. The term can mean “distribution, transposition; (disposition of) the three sacred fires or the space between them; sauntering about, promenading; diversion, enjoyment, pleasure; place of recreation; Buddha’s pleasure ground; Buddhist (or Jain) monastery or temple” (Arthur A. MacDonnell 1893, 293). A more expansive list was given in Monier Monier-Williams et al. 2002, 1003. The architectural historian Stella Kramrisch offers another insightful interpretation. In discussing the names and origins of the temple, she notes that *vihāra* is derived from “hr,” to take asunder, and “vi-har,” to construct. Kramrisch believes this term, together with the two most significant words used to refer to a temple, *vimana* and *prasada*, could not be directly translated as such. They all in their own way express the process of giving shape to the existence of an establishment. Thus, a temple, acquired its concrete form, is “the place and symbol, by means of architecture, of manifestation and reintegration” (Stella Kramrisch 1976, vol.1, 131-138, and 175).

<sup>558</sup> James Fergusson 1864, xv-xvi.

<sup>559</sup> When Indian Buddhist scriptures started to be translated into Chinese in the mid-second century, the task of domesticating such alien artifacts, both linguistically and culturally, involved numerous decisions, and the coexistence of a number of distinctive translation policies had resulted in strikingly different repertoires of vocabulary. Current studies believe that in the early stages of Buddhist text translation, it is impossible to generalize a translation style. See Jan Nattier 2009, 17.

houses (精房)”, “concentrative chambers (精室)”, its homophones “quiescent chamber (静室, var. 靖室)”, and an amalgamation “concentrative shanty (精廬)”.<sup>560</sup>

Then Kāśyapa had two brothers, the second [brother] is called Nadīkāśyapa and the youngest Gayākāśyapa. The two brothers each had two hundred fifty disciples, whose shanty dwellings lined up to populate the riverbanks.<sup>561</sup>

是時迦葉二弟。次曰那提迦葉。幼曰迦耶迦葉。二弟各有二百五十弟子。盧舍列居水邊。<sup>562</sup>

There are natural springs and baths everywhere, inside and outside the lecture halls and concentrative dwellings of the Immeasurable and Pure Buddha, and the Seven Jewels housed occupied by all the Bodhisattvas and arhats.

無量清淨佛講堂。精舍。及諸菩薩。阿羅漢所居七寶舍宅中。外內處處皆復自然流泉水浴池。<sup>563</sup>

The King built an ancestral shrine [i.e. a monastery] for the Buddha, the number of concentrative houses and meditation chambers totaled three thousand. All monks resided inside, chanting *sūtras* and practicing meditation.

王立佛宗廟。精房禪室。凡有三千。諸比丘處其中。誦經坐禪。<sup>564</sup>

The term “*jingshe*” eventually gained the most popularity and became almost interchangeable with other terms used to denote monasteries.<sup>565</sup> Although by this time, these terms were mainly used to describe architectural images that had a clear Indic connection, the *locus classicus* of the term *jingshe* is in fact found in the *Book of Master*

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<sup>560</sup> Jonathan E. E. Pettit 2013, 66-67.

<sup>561</sup> Translation modified after Jonathan E. E. Pettit 2013, 67.

<sup>562</sup> *The Sūtra of the Auspicious Origins of the Prince as Spoken by the Buddha* 佛說太子瑞應本起經 (T03n185), 482c. The text was translated by Zhi Qian 支謙 (fl. 222-253 CE).

<sup>563</sup> *The Sūtra of Infinite and Pure, Universal and Impartial Perception as Spoken by the Buddha* 佛說無量清淨平等覺經 (T12n361), 283b. The text was also attributed to Zhi Qian, and believed to be revised from an earlier version translated by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 (T12n362). See Jan Nattier 2008, 86-87, 136.

<sup>564</sup> *The Sūtra of Buddha's Nirvāṇa* 佛般泥洹經 (Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*) (T01n05), 175b.

<sup>565</sup> In addition to “*śī*”, another commonly used term is “*sengqielanmo* (僧伽藍摩, abbr. 伽藍)”, from the Sanskrit term “*sangharama*”.

*Guan* 管子.<sup>566</sup> Quite like the Sanskrit term *vihāra*, its Chinese counterpart *jingshe* also emphasized the importance of a dwelling process instead of the physical structure.<sup>567</sup>

In the following 4th and 5th centuries, the *jingshe* archetype was not only mentioned as a foreign dwelling in Indic texts, it was also “transplanted” onto the Chinese soil. Some earliest records include:

Huan [Yi] (d. ca. 392 CE) built houses and halls for [Hui]yuan (334-416 CE) on the east side of the mountain, which [came to be] known as the Eastern Grove [Monastery]. [Hui]yuan built a concentrative dwelling, [based on] a cavern that took advantage of the beauty of the mountains. It backed against Fragrant Censer Peak, and was next to a waterfall pouring into a gully. Foundations were built using the onsite rocks, and structures were made incorporating existing pines. A clear rivulet flowed around the steps [leading to the monastery], and white clouds filled its rooms. 恆[伊]乃為[慧]遠復於山東立房殿。即東林是也。[慧]遠創造精舍。洞盡山美。卻負香爐之峰。傍瀑布之壑。仍石壘基，即松栽構。清泉環階。白雲滿室。

[Sengji] (d. 450 CE) cleared out the filbert and weeds and constructed a concentrative dwelling. [Its] spire rose and pierced the clouds, and [its] halls were elevated to rest on the sun. [He] chiseled a ravine for the mountain creek to run through [the monastery], and set [the monastery] against a steep cliff that lined with

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<sup>566</sup> This collections of writings on classical thought, attributed to Guan Zhong 管仲 (685-645 BCE), the minister of the State of Qi 齊, probably took shape in the pre-Buddhist period. It includes the earliest discussions on the workings of the mind and the practice of breath and dietary controls among extant Chinese texts. In the “Inner Works 內業” chapter of the *Book of Master Guan*, a verse reads:

“When you can be properly aligned and can be still, / Then, you can be settled. / With a settled heart, mind in your center, / Your ears and eyes are acute and clear, / Your four limbs are hard and strong, / You are able to become a *jingshe* / This essence / Is essence of Qi! 能正能靜。然後能定。定心在中。耳目聰明。四枝堅固。可以為精舍。精也者。氣之精者也。” (translation after W. Allyn Rickett 1985, vol.1, 43)

<sup>567</sup> The “*jing* (精)” in *jingshe* is one of its key concept in the *Book of Master Guan*, which originally meant fine and pure rice, and by extension, referring to the unadulterated essence of things or a state of mind that is concentrated on a single purpose (W. Allyn Rickett 1985, vol.1, 29). Correspondingly, *jingshe* could be interpreted as the “dwelling for essence”, probably referring to one’s heart, as the annotator Yin Zhizhang 尹知章 (c. 669-718 CE) annotated: “Heart, is where the essence is placed.” Based on sources found in the *Book of Later Han*, Kasuga Reichi has suggested that by the first century CE, the term took on layers of meaning and was used to refer to funerary stone chambers, as well as private academies that often focused on the studies of ancient classics (Kasuga Reichi 1969, 129-135).

trees.

[僧濟]剪開榛蕪。造立精舍。聳刹陵雲。高堂架日。鑿澗延流。傍巖列樹。

[Huiji] (412-496 CE) then built the Concentrative Dwelling of the Treasured Grove at the Turtle Mountain of Kuai village. [He] laid the bricks and stones by hand, and personally gave instructions [on the construction]. [The structure] sat perched atop a steep [cliff] and took full advantage of the landscape of the mountains.

[慧基]乃於會邑龜山立寶林精舍。手壘磚石。躬自指麾。架懸乘險。製極山狀。

Quite comparable to its Indic counterpart *vihāra*, early references to a Chinese *jingshe* also imply a dwelling ideal that unmistakably evoke the trope of the ascetics' or the Buddha's hut from the Indic tradition. Concentrative dwellings were often found in mountains or forests and located near streams, in other words, in a space of "heterotopia".

#### CAVE SHRINES VS. TIMBER HALLS IN THE CHINESE HETEROTOPIA

As seen in the aforementioned descriptions of *jingshe*, the relocation from metropolis to mountains seemed to be the hallmark in the initial rise of concentrative dwellings. Nevertheless, as I demonstrate, differences in building materials and architectural style existed between the North and South. It is instrumental to examine a passage in the biography of Dharmamitra 曇摩密多 (356-442 CE), who was born in Jibin 罽賓 (roughly corresponding to the Greater Gandhāra area), latered to North China through the Hexi Corridor, eventually traveling to South China in Yuanjia 元嘉 1 (424 CE) of the Song of Southern Dynasties:

[Dharmamitra] travelled across the [Desert of] Shifting Sands, and arrived at Dunhuang, where [he] established concentrative dwellings on the bare land, and planted thousands of trees there. The houses, pavilions, pounds and groves, were all extremely solemn and tranquil. Shortly after, [he] arrived at Liangzhou, where he renovated existing official bureaus and old government departments into [monastic]



buildings. [...Dharmamitra] arrived at the capital city [Jianye] in Yuanjia 10 (433 CE) and resided at the Lower Steadfast Grove Monastery in Mount Zhong. [He] constantly lamented that the landscaping of the Lower Monastery had not fully captured the magnificent character [of the mountain]. Thereupon, [he] went atop [the mountain] to look for a site, and took divinatory reading of the topography. In Yuanjia 12 (435 CE), [he] hewed rocks and carved logs in planning and building the Upper Monastery. The completed halls, houses, and meditation chambers were solemn and cavernous. In fact, [they] were modeled after the Vulture Peak and made to resemble the Jetavana Grove.

[曇摩密多]遂度流沙。進到燉煌。於曠野之地。建立精舍。植柰千株。房閣池林。極為嚴淨。頃之復適涼州。仍於公府舊寺。更營堂宇。[...] 元嘉十年還都。止鐘山定林下寺。[...] 常嘆下寺基構，未窮形勝。於是承高相地。揆卜山勢。以元嘉十二年。斬石刊木。營建上寺。殿房禪室。肅然深遠。實依倚鷲巖。彷彿祇樹矣。

Note the author distinguished Dharmamitra's building activities in three different settings, demonstrating the three most exemplifying modes of monastic constructions of the time.

At Dunhuang, where he chose a remote place for settlement, he constructed the kind of concentrative dwellings often related to hermitage.<sup>568</sup> In the metropolitan Liangzhou, Dharmamitra adapted old government buildings. Finally, after he travelled south, Dharmamitra built the Upper and Lower Steady Grove Monastery at Mount Zhong 鐘山, a mountain site near the capital Jianye 建業 (l.k.a. Jiangkang 建康, present-day Nanjing 南京, Jiangsu province).

Two observations could be made here. Firstly, the contrast between metropolis and mountain monasticism was stark. In major cities, in addition to converting monasteries from official architecture, the practice of “donating mansions to build monasteries (捨宅建

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<sup>568</sup> These resident buildings may have been related to the grotto sites preserved to date, but nonetheless did not preserve.

寺)” had gradually gained popularity. Buddhist monasteries remained similar to official or palatial architecture. Secondly, for the Buddhist space adopted in mountain monasticism, the text suggests a distinction between the North and South. In the North, artificial grottoes have been chiseled in mountain sites along the Silk Road as well as in the suburbs of metropolises since the third to fourth centuries CE.<sup>569</sup> These sites were closely linked to neighboring hubs of transportations and commerce, but nonetheless initially built as a retreat from the urban settings. The caves at the foot of the Mingshashan 鳴沙山 (l.k.a. Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟), for instance, were situated in a river valley some twenty-five kilometers outside of the Dunhuang proper.

For Southern mountain establishments, one of the earliest textual descriptions was in fact preserved in Daoist treatises. It nonetheless provides extremely valuable insights for the current study. During the earliest years of religious activities at Maoshan 茅山 in the Eastern Jin dynasty, Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386 CE) detailed his blueprint for building a Daoist “quiescent chamber”:<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> In the Chinese Central Asia, the dating of grotto sites has been largely relying on stylistic analyses, and therefore under debate due to the lack of definitive textual records. Recently, with the help of carbon-14 dating calibrated by tree ring measurements, Grotto at Kizil, near Kucha, Xinjiang province, have established a chronology starting from the third century. See Li Chongfeng 2014c, 559-609. The earliest epigraphic evidence at grotto sites remained to be a “renovation inscription” dated to Jianhong 建弘 1 (420 CE) of the Western Qin 西秦 dynasty, found at the Binglingsi 炳靈寺 caves at Yongjing 永靖, present-day Gansu province. It points to earlier dates of establishments for the site, and some scholars even argued for the Western Jin founding legend advocated by Daoshi 道世 in *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma* 法苑珠林. In any case, it is safe to suggest the tradition of rock-cut architecture had transmitted along the Silk Road into North China by the Sixteen Kingdoms period.

<sup>570</sup> Yang Xi claimed starting to receive revelations from the heaven of Highest Clarity 上清 since Xingning 興寧 2 (364 CE), and was directed to make transcripts of the materials. As the spiritual advisor of an Eastern Jin court official Xu Mi 許謐 (303-373 CE), Yang had been persuading him to establish a Daoist compound at Maoshan. For more on Yang Mi and the cult of Highest Clarity, see Michel Strickmann 1977, 1-64;

That which [we] call a “quiescent chamber” is also known as a “grass hut”, a “squared room,” or a “ringed enclosure”. The method by which one constructs this room [is as follows]: Take four columns, three purlins, and two beams. Make sure [their] *cai* [modular] is the same. The room is 1 *zhang* and 9 *chi* in length from east to west. The central bearing ridge is 1 *zhang* and 2 *chi*, leaving 3 *chi* on each end. Leave 3 *chi* and 5 *cun* in back for the veranda, and 3 *chi* at the south facing front side. The ridge purlin will be 9 *chi* and 6 *cun* above ground, the two purlins on both sides will rise 7 *chi* and 2 *cun* above ground. The door should be opened in the southeast corner and should be 6 *chi* and 5 *cun* high, 2 *chi* and 4 *cun* wide. Make the door panels with planks, and make sure to [place the planks] tight, so there will not be any seams in between. Open a window on the southern wall, whose name is “Penetrating Radiance”, and [it] should be 1 *chi* and 7 *cun* long and 1 *chi* and 5 *cun* high. [Place the window at the height so that] when sitting in the room, [it] is on the same line with [your] eyebrows. Inside there should be a platform, 1 *chi* and 2 *cun* high, 9 *chi* and 6 *cun* long, and 6 *chi* and 5 *cun* wide. [Apply] straw mats according to the heat or coldness of the time.<sup>571</sup>

所謂靜室者。一曰茅屋。二曰方溜室。三曰環堵。制屋之法：用四柱三桁二梁。取同種材。屋東西首長一丈九尺。成中一丈二尺。二頭各餘三尺。後溜餘三尺五寸。前南溜餘三尺。棟去地九尺六寸。二邊桁去地七尺二寸。東南開戶。高六尺五寸。廣二尺四寸。用材為戶扇。務令茂密。無使有隙。南面開牖。名曰通光。長一尺七寸。高一尺五寸。在室中坐。令平眉。中有板床。高一尺而寸。長九尺六寸。廣六尺五寸。薦席隨時寒暑。

The “quiescent chamber”, therefore, was envisioned as a small timber structure situated on the mountain landscape of Maoshan. Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536 CE), who edited and codified the corpus of Yang’s manuscripts during the Southern Dynasties, retrospectively observed that “because there are no stone chambers (石室) at Maoshan, therefore, it is necessary to construct a hut dwelling (廬舍).” Tao’s words emphasized the importance of ritual compound as necessary for salvation, while alluding to the general lack of rock-cut

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Isabelle Robinet 2000, 196-224. For detailed study on Yang Xi and his prospectus of a Daoist temple at Maoshan, see Jonathan E. E. Pettit 2013, 16-39.

<sup>571</sup> Translation modified after Jonathan E. E. Pettit 2013, 29.

structures in south China. This observation applies to both Buddhist and Daoist establishments.

As Daoist temples rapidly evolved, its architecture raveled the Buddhist ones, as observed in the description of a mountain temple patronized by emperors of the Song Kingdom:

The Illuminous Shizong Emperor of the Song carved mountainsides to pay reverence to the [Deity of] True Mandate, and built abbeys to attract the secluded hermits. [He] bore into cliffs to construct roofs, and chiseled rocks to cut out the foundation. [Here] he sent a cassia dais soaring to aurora cliffs, and built peppered towers over smoky gullies. Phoenixes stayed at the breezy chambers, and transcendents resided inside the moon gates. Seekers of the Dao gazed out over ocean coves, while [those who] lived by pure virtues lived there [in the mountains].

宋世宗明皇帝開岳以禮真命。築館以招幽逸。乃鑿峰構宇。刊石裁基。聳桂榭於霞巘。架椒樓於煙壑。風閨佇鳳。月戶懷仙。求道望於海隅。簡素德以居之也。<sup>572</sup>

Boasting its lavish architecture, the essential feature of the temple remained in its mountain landscape, with its foundations carved out of live rock and halls constructed with timber. Examined together with aforementioned textual records, we can conclude that the South overwhelmingly built “thatched huts” as hermits dwellings, which later developed into increasingly sophisticated timber-framed structures that took full advantage of the mountainous terrain.<sup>573</sup> On the other hand, although timber structures must have existed

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<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

<sup>573</sup> Huiyuan is said to have carved a Buddhist statue on a mountainside at Lushan, which serves to indicate that Southern Dynasties still had cave sites, however, based on the sites that survived, its number could not compare with the north. The Thousand Buddha Cave at Qixiasi 棲霞寺, for instance, is a rare example of Southern dynasty cave shrine preserved to date, but the main sanctuary is in fact not a rock-cut cave. It was a masonry structure constructed against the side of the low-rising hill.

alongside excavated caves, as attested by the sheer number of extant grotto sites, it seemed the North favored the format of “stone chambers”, which later developed into elaborate rock-cut cave temples with timber façades.

#### FOGUANGSI AT THE TURN OF MOUNTAIN MONASTIC TRADITION

Close to the Wutai area, there are many cave temple sites typical for the Northern Buddhist architectural tradition, including Northern Wei precedents at Yungang near Pingcheng (near present-day Datong), and Northern Qi establishments near Jinyang (near present-day Taiyuan). For instance, there was a Great Pavilion of Kaihua 開化大閣, located at Mengshan 蒙山 to the northwest of Taiyuan, where a colossal Buddha still stands, and a Tongzi Pavilion of the Tongzi Statue 童子像閣 at Mount Long 龍山 (a.k.a. Mount Xuanweng 懸甕山), whose establishment dates back to the Northern Qi dynasty, through prominent imperial patronage, and continued to be favored by the court into the Tang period.<sup>574</sup> Both appeared in the Dunhuang manuscript P.4648, written by a pilgrim travelling in the late 9th or early 10th century. It is recorded that after touring the monasteries in the Northern Capital of Taiyuan:

[I] visited and paid reverence to each and every one of the ten mountain monasteries located on mountains to the northwest and due west of the capital. [These] include the Great Pavilion of Kaihua to the northwest of the capital, where there is a stone sculpture of a Buddha. Furthermore, there is a mountain to due west, which has a pavilion [located on it], named Pavilion of the Tongzi Statue, which also has a stone Buddha.

又於京西北及正西山內，有一十所山寺，皆遍禮訖。京西北有開化大閣，兼有

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<sup>574</sup> Ku Cheng Mei 2003, 155-221. On “Prince Moonlight”, see Erick Zürcher 1982, 1-75.

石佛一尊，又正西有山，有閣一所，名童子像閣，兼有石佛。<sup>575</sup>

Recent excavations have revealed the foundation of two adjacent architectural compounds of the monastery known as Tongzisi. The front courtyard was built on terraced ground, and centered on a colossal Buddha statue carved out of the mountain cliff, with timber architecture constructed around it. The pavilion at Mengshan followed a similar formula. Their architectural designs are naturally based on the earlier Northern Wei period scheme, exemplified by a colossal Buddha sculpted inside cave chapels at Yungang Grotto, where only timber façades were appended on the front.

Such cave temples must have existed in Mount Wutai as well. The most typical layout features a cave shrine carved into the mountain side, often with timber structures built near the entrance.<sup>576</sup> For example, the Cloister of the Teaching and Prohibitions of the Seven Buddhas 七佛教誡院 featured:

[There is] a small grotto, inside which placed the representations of the Seven Buddhas. There is a hall right in front of the mouth of the grotto.<sup>577</sup>  
於小窟中安置七佛像。當窟戶有一堂。<sup>578</sup>

The renowned Diamond Grotto 金剛窟,<sup>579</sup> on the other hand, was of a more spectacular

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<sup>575</sup> For an annotated transcription of the entire text, see Zheng Binglin 1989, 309-311.

<sup>576</sup> The combination of Grotto and timber front halls dating to the Tang and Song period were still preserved at Dunhuang. See Mogao Caves 53, 196, 427, 431, 437 and 444, for example.

<sup>577</sup> Translation modified after Edwin O. Reischauer 1955, 263.

<sup>578</sup> Bai Huawen et al., annot. 2007, 303.

<sup>579</sup> According to the legend given in the *Ancient Records*, a Northern Qi monk named Xiangyun 祥雲 encountered the spirit-lord of the mountain. He was led to his dwelling at the Diamond Grotto, and was given an herb of spirit-power that made him immortal. Citing the *Record of Numinous Traces* 靈跡記, Huixiang also stated that Mañjuśrī will go into the Diamond Grotto during the time between Kāśyapa Buddha 迦葉佛's extinction and the emergence of the Śākyamuni Buddha, and return to the grotto again after Śākyamuni Buddha achieved *nirvāṇa*. It was also the place where the Indian monk Buddhapālita had chosen for his eternal withdrawal, and where the monk Wuzhu 無著 and his envisioned Conjured Prajñā Monastery 化般

kind:

The Grotto is on the side of a valley. [...] The grotto wall is firm and has a yellow hue. There is a tall tower right in front of the mouth of the grotto [against the face of the cliff where the grotto is located]. The entrance to the grotto located at the base of the tower, but no one can see it. [...] Up in the grotto mouth tower is a revolving *sūtra* repository made in a hexagon shape.<sup>580</sup>

窟在谷邊。[...] 窟巖堅密，帶黃色。當窟戶有高樓。窟門在樓下，人不得見。 [...]窟戶樓上有轉輪藏，六角造之。<sup>581</sup>

The lofty structure built at Diamond Grotto, referred as a “grotto mouth tower (窟戶樓)” by the Japanese pilgrim monk Ennin,<sup>582</sup> may have resembled the kind of cave pavilion seen at Cave 96 at Dunhuang, which went through later restorations but nonetheless reflecting its original early Tang design.

As I mentioned in at the beginning of this chapter, Indian grotto sites were already employing the technique to harvest the full spiritual power of their mountain sites, and some northern grotto sites built under the Tang likewise carved their central altars and icons directly from the rock of the mountain. Among the numerous cave shrines excavated on the cliffside of Mount Wuzhou at the Longmen Grotto near Luoyang, a group of three that are commonly known as the “Leigutai 擂鼓臺 Caves”, stood out. (Figure 11) They

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若寺 would set the model for subsequent tales of conjured monasteries. The grotto remained an important site of worship until very recent times. However, unfortunately, it destroyed to make way for Lin Biao 林彪’s holiday hideaway. Birnbaum provides a very detailed analysis of the textual sources on Diamond Grotto (Raoul Birnbaum 1989, 120-134).

<sup>580</sup> Translation modified after Edwin O. Reischauer 1955, 246-247.

<sup>581</sup> Bai Huawen et al., annot. 2007, 287-288.

<sup>582</sup> In addition to the pavilion, there seems to be an additional structure located on top of the cave. Ennin recalled walking up a slope from the grotto, and encountering other buildings of the monastery including the Hall of Mañjuśrī and the Hall of Samantabhadra. Jōjin also visited the Diamond Grotto. He recorded that “above the grotto”, there was a life-sized statue of Mañjuśrī with attendants, which may be referring to the icon housed in the Hall of Mañjuśrī. See Bai Huawen et al., annot. 2007, 412.

have long been suspected to be imperially sponsored project, probably received patronage from Empress Wu herself.<sup>583</sup> The Northern Cave of Leigutai was the earliest among the three, which adopted a more conventional layout with three principle icons arranged along the three inner walls. The Central and Southern Caves, which are relatively built later during the Great Zhou interregnum, both adopted a spatial layout featuring a central altar carved directly out of the mountain. Archaeological excavations suggest that all three caves once had timber structures built in front of their entrances. The overall landscaping of Leigutai Caves greatly resemble that of the Buddha Hall, situated on lofty platforms chisled out along the mountain cliff, accessed only through steep staircases. (Figure 12)

However, when compared with the Leigutai Caves, the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi seems to have been a further development. Instead of resorting to simply adding a timber façade to an cave sanctum, the Buddha Hall fully adopted a timber-framed structure while retaining the essential element of a rock-cut altar. (Figure 13) As I discussed above, the combination of a primarily timber-framed structure with a bedrock-hewed foundation was only seen in the literary descriptions of Southern temples and monasteries, such as Huiyuan, who “laid foundations on top of the onsite rocks (仍石壘基)”, and Emperor Shizong, who “chiseled rocks to cut out the foundation (刊石裁基)” in their architectural design. This kind of combination was in all likelihood inspired by the architectural design of Southern mountain monasteries developed during the period of

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<sup>583</sup> Li Chongfeng 2014b, 529-558.



division.

Belonging to the broader loessial areas along the middle reaches of the Yellow River, Hedong, as well as the Guannei, was home to the building tradition of rammed-earth or abode bricks. Additionally, the common dwellings of the region had featured an excavated, cave-like form, often nested in subterranean or cliff-side spaces — a tradition that reaches back to at least seven thousand years according to archaeological evidence. Contrast was often drawn with the building tradition in the marshy and wooded lower reaches of the Yangzi River, another ancient cradle of Chinese civilization, to construct a paradigm between timber and earth construction prototypes, and furthermore the dichotomy between Northern and Southern structural systems.<sup>584</sup>

The reunification of Sui and Tang periods prompted unprecedented cultural mobility. A series of waterway system, including the two grand Tongji 永濟 and Yongji 通濟 Canals built during the Sui dynasty, linked the Yellow River with the southern and northeast parts of the empire, providing provisions for the capital cities. During the Tang dynasty, highways along the river valleys of the Yellow River were lined with numerous courier stations, connecting the three capital cities. Bridges and ferries were set up that allowed traffic crossing between Guannei and Hedong across the divide of the Yellow

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<sup>584</sup> Chinese architectural historians have proposed a simple bimodal derivation model for later developments in domestic architecture, the cave and the nest, and the excavation of pre-historical sites at Banpo 半坡 and Hemudu 河姆渡 seem to have strengthened such theories (Pan Guxi 2001, 15-16; for an English overview, see Ronald G. Knapp 1986, 5-9). By adding other primal forms of dwellings such as the yurt, other scholars have also attempted to develop multivariate architectural origins (Liu Zhiping 2000, 9-10 and Zhang Lianghao 2002, 33 and 43), however, the predominant status of these two basic forms remains the same. For more on this binary system, see Tanaka Tan 1984; Zhao Chen 2000 and id. 2005; Xiao Min 2005.

River, and mountain passes known as “*xing* routes (陁道)” connected the plateau area with the fertile plain along the eastern coast and the grassland of the northern Steppe beyond the Taihang-Yan Mountains. Therefore, the Hedong region during the Tang dynasty was subject to the influx of new building patterns from the south. It is located in an area that best reflects the clash between imported and native traditions, which was filtered through the dynastic capital.

Although architects generally remained anonymous in the traditional Chinese literary tradition,<sup>585</sup> there are enough records in the biographic information of mural artists for architectural projects due to the more prestigious status attributed to painting, thus providing a valuable window for examining the movements of craftspeople and knowledge. According to the statistics provided by Ma Xinguang, there was a marked divide between the North and the South during the period prior to Sui and Tang dynasties, when buildings were painted by local artists. For instance, as an outstanding mural painter who was “extremely apt in decorating pagodas and monasteries”, Zhang Sengyao 張僧繇 (fl. 502 -519 CE) consistently worked on building projects in south China. The only known exceptions in the North were relocated and were originally taken from the South. However, once reaching the unified Sui dynasty, renowned painters of the time such as Zhan Ziqian 展子虔 (d.u.) and Dong Poren 董伯仁 (d.u.) gained much more freedom, moving from one commission to another. Their works were located in the capital area of Daxing (l.k.a.

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<sup>585</sup> There are exceptions, for example, the celebrated scholar-official architect Yuwen Kai 宇文愷 (555-612 CE), or the legendary architect-cum-engineer Li Chun 李春 (fl. 6th-7th c. CE). It is worth noting that these high profile architects were exceptions rather than the norm.

Chang'an) all the way to the powerhouse of previous Southern dynasties on the Yangzi River, even reaching as far as the Sichuan Basin. The succeeding Tang empire witnessed a further increase in such cultural mobility. One of the most sought-after mural artist Wu Daozi 吳道子 (ca. 685-758 CE) painted for building projects in at least fifteen prefectures or municipalities of the empire.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> See Ma Xinguang 2012, 14-16.

## CHAPTER 4 BETWEEN CAVES AND PALACES: THE CHINESE TRANSFORMATION OF BUDDHIST SPACE

The Buddhist altar carved directly from the live rock of the mountain gave form to the most central and potent space of the Buddha Hall. Lined with bricks and decorative woodwork, the rectangular shaped platform was delimited by partition walls and panels on the sides and the rear. The semi-enclosed space atop the platform houses the principle occupants of the architecture — a Buddhist assembly of thirty some Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Heavenly Kings and so forth.<sup>587</sup> (Figures 14 & 15) These clay statues were the initial reasons that drew scholarly attention to the then obscure Foguangsi. When the Japanese monk scholar Ono Genmyō visited Foguangsi in 1922 CE, acknowledging apparent repairs and repainting, he nonetheless dated the statues as Tang dynasty artifacts based on their overall postures and proportions, as well as their executive style and artistic details such as the clinging and folds of garments.<sup>588</sup> In another article published in the same year, Ono narrowed his dating bracket to sometime between the Dali 大歷 and Dazhong 大中 eras (766-860 CE), mainly by citing the monastic history of Foguangsi.<sup>589</sup> Additionally, he exercised preliminary comparisons with Tang dynasty clay statues preserved at the Ten Thousand Buddhas Grotto 千佛洞 (a.k.a. Mogao Caves) of

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<sup>587</sup> They are later joined by arhat statues that lined up in the area surrounding the main altar. However, as I discuss in the following chapter, the arhats were Ming dynasty additions, and would not have their place in the original Tang design of the Buddha Hall.

<sup>588</sup> Ono Genmyō 1922 a, 748.

<sup>589</sup> Ono mentioned the two sūtra-pillars from the Dazhong (847-859 CE) and Qianfu 乾符 (874-879CE) eras, and noted that Foguangsi must have prospered during this time, and the statues were likely from building activities that increased consequently (Ono Genmyō 1922 b, 181-182).

Dunhuang, arguing that despite the geographic distance between Wutai and Dunhuang, these two groups of clay statues shared stylistic traits, probably as a result of the frequent traffics between these two sacred sites during the Tang period.<sup>590</sup>

Following Ono Genmyō, the statues of Buddha Hall received an entry in Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi's compilations of Chinese Buddhist arts, which dated the group as made "prior to the Song dynasty".<sup>591</sup> For the architectural investigation led by Liang Ssu-ch'eng, descriptions of the statues also made a considerable section of the 1944-45 CE report under the section "auxiliary arts of the Buddha Hall", where Liang also implied that the statues conform to Tang dynasty style and iconography.<sup>592</sup> Marylin M. Rhie's Foguangsi monography published in 1977 CE mainly focused on the images of the Buddha Hall. Through detailed stylistic analysis and chronological studies with other dated materials, Rhie concluded with dating the statues with a "mid-ninth century style".<sup>593</sup> However, sample was taken from the clay pedestal of the Buddha statue on the north side for C-14 test, and the results called for a mid-eighth century date.<sup>594</sup> Although no inscription survived to offer explicit dating or identifications for any of the statues, in this chapter, I provide iconographic analyses in order to shed some light on these issues.

Overall, the statues housed at the Buddha Hall reflected a remarkable development for Buddhist art in the Tang dynasty. The five principle deities placed alongside each other

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<sup>590</sup> Ono Genmyō 1922 b, 175-181.

<sup>591</sup> Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1928 b, vol.5, 42-45; id. 1938 b, vol.1, 104-107.

<sup>592</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944, 37-39.

<sup>593</sup> Marylin M. Rhie 1977, 174.

<sup>594</sup> See the section on "Architectural And Archaeological Surveys" in the Introduction of this thesis.

in one single place innovatively combined “Avataṃsaka Trinity” and the “Cosmic Triad” formulas. It highlights the vital role played by Mount Wutai in the formation and spread of these iconographic designs, including the presence of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra as a pair that was deeply associated with their significance in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and their popularity in this region during the Tang dynasty. The “Vairocana-Maitreya-Amitābha” combination, or the Cosmic Triad, on the other hand, also captured the inconceivable spatial and temporal dimensions derived from the Avataṃsaka cosmology. While retaining the essential element of a rock-cut altar of cave shrines, the statues of the Buddha Hall fully took advantage of the wide and shallow space of Chinese timber halls, which made possible the display of multiple Buddhist images side by side as an integrated design. It marked a clear departure from earlier Buddhist space constructed in China that often adopted square and symmetrical plans. Finally, my analyses of the architectural structure and decorative details of the Buddha Hall also suggest that in contrast to the early rock-cut cave temples, mountain monasteries like Foguangsi had involved to embrace timber buildings in shaping their religious space.

#### **MAÑJUŚRĪ, SAMANTABHADRA, THE AVATAṂSAKA TRINITY AND MOUNT WUTAI**

The most distinctive figures in the Buddha Hall statue group were the two Bodhisattvas occupying the northern and southern ends of the altar. (Figures 16) Their *vāhanas*, a lion and an elephant, unmistakably gave away their identities as Mañjuśrī and

Samantabhadra.<sup>595</sup> Although these two Bodhisattvas were already depicted separately in Chinese Buddhist art no later than the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, they only started to appear as a symmetric pair in the early Tang, and soon gained widespread popularity along with the unprecedented prominence of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.<sup>596</sup> They were listed as the two “Great Bodhisattvas (上首菩薩)” in the last chapter of the sixty- and eighty-fascicle recensions of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the “Entry into the Realm of Reality

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<sup>595</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng misidentified Mañjuśrī as Avalokiteśvara (Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944, 38). His opinion still exerts influence on the writings of architectural historians who are perhaps not otherwise familiar with Buddhist iconography. See Lü Zhou ed. 2011, 229, 242-243.

<sup>596</sup> Samantabhadra became popular mainly due to his appearance in the *Lotus Sūtra*. Based on the scripture that he rode a “six-tusked white elephant 六牙白象” (T09n0262, 0061a-0061b), he had been illustrated with his mount in some of the earliest Buddhist sculptures found in China. Kojima Aya has pointed out several records of Samantabhadra statues commissioned under the Liu-Song 劉宋 (420-479 CE) of the Southern Dynasties, worshipped independently and with the Bodhisattva mounted on his six-tusked white elephant (Kojima Aya 1995, 52). However, not all Buddhist deities with an elephant mount should be assumed to be Samantabhadra. For example, a statue mounted on an elephant, accompanied by two smaller personages, was carved in high relief flanking the entrance of Cave 165 of the Northern Cave Temples 北石窟寺, located at Mount Fuzhong 覆鐘山, near Qingyang 慶陽, Gansu province, and dated to the Northern Wei period. It was paired with the three-headed, four-armed figure on the other side of the entrance. Scholars have traditionally identified the figure as Samantabhadra (Angela F. Howard 2006, 247-248). However, given the overall pictorial program, the statue is more likely a representation of Śakra/Indra and his elephant mount Airavata. Śakra/Indra and Brahmā have made frequent appearances in early art and scriptures from Gandhāra and Mathura, as two worshippers flanking the Buddha, and the pair was later absorbed into the Buddhist pantheon as guardian deities (Lokesh Chandra 1988, 24-25). On the other hand, prior to the Tang dynasty, Mañjuśrī had mainly appeared as a pair with Vimalakīrti 維摩詰 in Buddhist art, illustrating the popular debate between them portrayed in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*, a popular text whose earliest extant Chinese translation (T14n0474) by Zhi Qian, is dated to the early third century CE. In this context, Mañjuśrī was often illustrated as seated on a low couch, and there was no mentioning of an animal mount in the scripture. Kojima Aya has astutely pointed out that the pairing of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra mounted on *vāhanas* appears to be a distinct iconography in Chinese Buddhist art, probably rooted in the ideal of symmetry and the pairing of the mysterious animals in Chinese visual art since ancient times. Additionally, she argued that the Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra duo was anticipated by other depictions of mounted Buddhist deities. For example, two well-known episodes from the Jātaka tales, namely Queen Māyā’s dream and Prince Gautama’s departure, were often used as a symmetric pair, with a Bodhisattva riding an elephant and a prince riding a horse, as seen in the Northern Wei relief at Caves 5-11 of the Yungang Grotto (Kojima Aya 1995, 43-59).

入法界品”。<sup>597</sup> The sixty-fascicle recension, for example, opens with such a setting:

Thus have I heard: At one time, the Blessed One was in Sravasti, in a magnificent multi-storied pavilion in the garden of Anathapindada in the Jeta Grove, together with five thousand enlightening beings, led by the Great Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra.<sup>598</sup>

爾時佛在舍衛城祇樹給孤獨園。大莊嚴重閣講堂。與五百菩薩摩訶薩俱。普賢菩薩。文殊師利菩薩。而為上首。<sup>599</sup>

However, it should be noted that while the pairing of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra was indeed highlighted in the text of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, renowned early Avataṃsaka scholars such as Dushun 杜順 (557-640 CE) and Zhiyan 智嚴 (602-668 CE) had often emphasized Samantabhadra as the principle Bodhisattva of the scripture. It was not until the writings of two major figures with close ties to the Wutai area that Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra were given equal emphasis and the creation of the duo was consolidated. The first is the prominent lay scholar and an offspring of the imperial family, Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635-730 CE), who seems to be the originator of the “Avataṃsaka Trinity (三人互體)” concept, with Mañjuśrī denoting the “wisdom” and Samantabhadra representing the

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<sup>597</sup> This celebrated section of the text was known as the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* in Sanskrit. In addition to making up the last chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, it was also translated into Chinese as independent *sūtras*. For the textual history of the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, see Douglas Osto 2010, 1-21; Imre Hamar 2007, 139-167. Thomas Cleary described the chapter as “perhaps the grandest drama of the Buddhist canon”. He offers a masterful summary of the text, quoted here in full: “Known in Sanskrit as an individual scripture called *Gandavyuha*, this book describes the development of enlightenment through tales of a pilgrimage. The central character, a seeker of truth named Sudhana, is sent on a journey by Manjushri, the personification of wisdom. Initially directed by Manjushri, Sudhana calls on a number of spiritual guides, each of whom sends him on to another for further enlightenment. Eventually Sudhana comes to the abode of Maitreya, the imminent Buddha, and finally integrates with the total being of Samantabhadra, the representation of Universal Good, the activity of enlightenment.” See Thomas Cleary 1993, 45, and 1135-1518, for a full translation of the chapter.

<sup>598</sup> Translation modified after Thomas Cleary 1993, 1135.

<sup>599</sup> T09n0278, 0676a



“practice” of practitioners, and Vairocana as the one who is completely equipped with both of these two virtues.<sup>600</sup>

As Robert M. Gimello and others have noted, Li’s work had considerable influence on Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839 CE), who emphasized a device called the “Contemplations on the Perfection Infusion of the Three Sages (三聖圓融觀門)”. Chengguan explained the importance of the Three Sages as thus:

The “Three Sage” are: the primal teacher, the Tathāgata Vairocana, and the two great Bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. As the salvific means by which the supremely enlightened one responds to the world are as numerous as the grains of sand [in the Ganges], so it is of no little significance that in the Flower Adornment Scripture only Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra are featured as chief protagonists and charged with the task of expressing the dharma.<sup>601</sup>

三聖者。本師毗盧遮那如來。普賢文殊三大菩薩是也。大覺應世輔翼塵沙，而華嚴經中。獨標二聖為上首者。託以表法。不徒然也。

Both Li Tongxuan and Chengguan were much revered in the Wutai region, the former as a native of Taiyuan, an esteemed lay scholar whose Avataṃsaka practices appealed to the common people,<sup>602</sup> the latter as an eminent monk who resided in the Great Avataṃsaka Monastery on Mount Wutai, authoring numerous commentaries and sub-commentaries extracting the essence of the scripture.<sup>603</sup>

It comes as no surprise then, that what seems to be the earliest mentioning of the Avataṃsaka Trinity statues is found in the *Ancient Record*.<sup>604</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> Koh Seunghak 2011, 271-275.

<sup>601</sup> Translation modified after Robert M. Gimello 1996, 352-353.

<sup>602</sup> Robert M. Gimello 1983, 321-387.

<sup>603</sup> For a translation and study of Chengguan’s biography, see Imre Hamar 2002.

<sup>604</sup> Yanyi also took note of a resting station called “Grotto Monastery 石窟寺”, established by Master Yan

Thirty li to the south of the Central Terrace, there is an open route along the mountain ridge. It is a route frequented by those who wish to ascend to the top of the terrace. On the roadside, there is a three-bay stone chamber, inside which housed the statues of Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and so forth. There are other buildings for refectories and bookkeeping, or used to store other objects and utensils. [They were] built by Master Yan around the year Xianheng 3 (672 CE), intended as a resting place for passing Buddhists and laypersons to or from climbing the terrace.

中臺南三十餘里。在山之麓有通衢。乃登臺者。常遊此路也。傍有石室三間。內有釋迦文殊普賢等像。又有房宇厨帳器物存焉。近咸亨三年。儼禪師。於此修立。擬登臺道俗往來休憩。<sup>605</sup>

Note that the author Huixiang identified the central image as Śākyamuni instead of Vairocana, which may demonstrate an alternative presentation of the Avataṃsaka Trinity, since the two are considered to some extent interchangeable based on a widely circulated fifth-century Chinese apocryphal text entitled *Brahmajāla Sūtra* 梵網經, translated by the legendary Kuchan monk Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (334-413 CE).<sup>606</sup> Śākyamuni and Vairocana could appear with similar iconography, exemplified by the colossal Vairocana

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儼禪師 during the Tang dynasty, which probably referred to the same structure. See T51n2099, 1105c.

<sup>605</sup> T51n2098, 1095a.

<sup>606</sup> T24n1484. In the “Lotus Repository World” depicted in the scripture, Vairocana was the “original” Buddha, who incarnates into one thousand Śākyamuni Buddhas, and each Śākyamuni further incarnates into ten billion Śākyamuni bodhisattvas. In the text, both Vairocana and Śākyamuni spoke about such a connection between them, see T24n1484, 0997c, and 1003c-1004a, for example. I included a translation from the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* in later discussions. It has been pointed out by Ōtake Susumu that, in theory, Vairocana in the large *Buddhāvataṃsaka* (the sixty- or eighty-fascicle recension) is none other than Śākyamuni himself, since “Vairocana”, just like “Śākyamuni”, is not a name, but an epithet applied to the historical Buddha Gotama. However, I believe, and Ōtake would perhaps agree, there is a difference between what is “correct” theologically, and what was believed to be “correct” historically. For the present study, it is the historical perception that matters. Ōtake mentioned a very illuminating text, the *Mind that Disports Itself in the Avataṃsaka* 華嚴遊意, in which the author Jizang 吉藏 (549-623 CE) observed the disagreements between the southern and northern interpretations of Vairocana’s identity. He recorded that people in the Southern Dynasties regarded Śākyamuni and Vairocana as the same person in the sūtra, while people in the Northern Dynasties considered them as having different “bodies (Skr. *kāyas*)”, but essentially interchangeable, a concept that was seen expounded in *Brahmajāla Sūtra*. With the unification of the Sui and Tang, the northern interpretation dominated. See Ōtake Susumu 2012, 37-52.

statue of the Fengxian Cave, at Longmen Grotto near Luoyang, whose identity is verified by an imperial inscription, but the statue itself is otherwise undistinguishable from Śākyamuni in appearance.<sup>607</sup>

Buddhist theology, however, cannot explain all the iconographic aspects that emerged with the visual culture of the Avataṃsaka Trinity. Most notable is the specific visual presentation of Mañjuśrī in this group. Unlike Samantabhadra and his elephant mount, there appears to be no canonical basis for the lion mount of Mañjuśrī.<sup>608</sup> While the brief mentioning in the *Ancient Record* does not explicate any details of what the three Buddhist figures looked like, by the end of Tang dynasty, the Avataṃsaka Trinity images were idolized as a seated Buddha flanked by two mounted Bodhisattvas. In the so-called “Panoramas of Mount Wutai” in Mogao Cave 61, dated to the Five Dynasties period, the

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<sup>607</sup> Amy McNair 2007, 115-117.

<sup>608</sup> The earliest Buddhist literature that described Mañjuśrī riding a lion was a compilation of liturgical text translated by an Indian monk Atikūṭa 阿地瞿多 (fl. 7th c. CE) in Yonghui 永徽 5 (654 CE), entitled the *Collected Dhāraṇī Sūtras* 陀羅尼集經. The passage may have reflected the popularity of such an image, but it could not be the reason behind its emergence. As Kojima has pointed out, the pairing of Mañjuśrī riding was a distinct Chinese creation, and could not be found in any South Asian Buddhist visual materials. (See note 596 above). Nevertheless, as an immensely popular text, the *Collected Dhāraṇī Sūtras* may have played a role in further promoting the Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra pair. They appeared under “Instructions on [Drawing] the Image of Golden Wheel Uṣṇīṣa Buddha 金輪佛頂像法”:

“Take a piece of plain white cotton cloth similar to a piece of silk. [...] Draw the image of the World Honored One. [...] Beneath, draw Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on the left, whose body was completely white, with light emanating from a mandorla behind [his] head and [his] torso. [Draw him] adorned with jewelries, adorned with a crown and a celestial garment, and all other kinds of solemn adornments, riding on a lion. Draw Samantabhadra on the right, adorned as described above, riding on a white elephant.

取淨白疊若淨絹布 [...] 畫世尊像。[...] 其下左邊。畫作文殊師利菩薩。身皆白色。頂背有光。寶瓔珞。寶冠天衣。種種莊嚴。乘於師子。右邊畫作普賢菩薩。莊嚴如前。乘於白象。” (T18n901, 0790a)

The image of Uṣṇīṣa Buddha flanked by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra could be seen as an early esoterization of the Three Sages of Avataṃsaka. In later discussions, I will return to the esoterization of Vairocana in more detail.

Hall of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī's True Presence 大聖文殊真身殿 was shown housing the Avataṃsaka Trinity, featuring the true presence of Mañjuśrī with his lion *vāhana*. (Figure 16)

It seems that Mount Wutai assumed a vital role in the formation and spread of the mounted Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra iconography. The earliest visual evidence depicting Mañjuśrī mounted on a lion and accompanied by two attendants was preserved in Mogao Cave 148, dated to Dali 大歷 11 (776 CE) by inscription, where he appeared with Samantabhadra as a pair,<sup>609</sup> exactly during the period when Amoghavajra was actively promoting Wutai's Mañjuśrī cult.<sup>610</sup> (Figure 17) One may compare the image with the Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra pair placed in symmetrical positions in the mural program inside the Kondō of Hōryūji, in which Mañjuśrī was not mounted on a lion. Rather, he sat on a platform, similar to his conventional posture when paired with Vimalakīrti, and was simply juxtaposed with Samantabhadra mounted on his elephant.<sup>611</sup> (Figure 18) The mural at Hōryūji was dated to the eighth century,<sup>612</sup> probably reflecting an earlier model in circulation before being eclipsed by the new paradigm.

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<sup>609</sup> There are images of the Bodhisattva mounted on lions from the early-Tang period. However, they are not accompanied by the two attendants, an important characteristic of the fully developed Mañjuśrī iconography. As I explain below, the Mañjuśrī statue housed in the Buddha Hall of Foguansi and the Main Hall of Nanchansi used this particular formula.

<sup>610</sup> See the section on "Buddhist Master of the State and the Esoterization of Mañjuśrī's Cult" in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

<sup>611</sup> Mañjuśrī was also featured in the Five Storied Pagoda of Hōryūji, where he appeared with Vimalakīrti. They were among a group of sculptures placed on the southern side of the pagoda, representing the debate scene in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* (cf. note 596 above).

<sup>612</sup> Yanagawa Taka 1975.

One can still get a glimpse of the Tang dynasty vogue of the Avatamsaka Trinity in the Wutai area at Nanchansi 南禪寺, the other timber structure survived from the eighth century,<sup>613</sup> located in the mountain ranges close to Foguangsi. The three-by-three bay main hall is modest in scale, set up with a nearly square-shaped plan, featuring a U-shaped central altar. The seventeen sculptures preserved to date have obviously gone through later restorations, but their arrangement was little changed compared to the original design executed during the reign Emperor Daizong's immediate successor, Emperor Dezong. The main Buddhist statue in the center sat cross-legged on a high throne, with one arm placed on the one knee and another arm half-raised. This popular posture is not necessarily an identifier, but it was adopted by well-celebrated Vairocana statues, including the Fengxiansi statue completed in the mid-seventh century, and the Tōdaiji 東大寺 statue dated to the eighth century. The central Buddha was flanked by two monk figures, most likely Anada and Mahākāśyapa, and two additional Bodhisattva attendants kneeling in

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<sup>613</sup> Nancy S. Steinhardt 1984b, 102-107. Nanchansi was “discovered” in the first “Cultural Relics Survey” after the founding of PRC (Shanxi Sheng Wenwu Diaocha Zu 1954; Qi Yingtao et al. 1954; Qi Yingtao, Du Xianzhou and Chen Mingda 1954). The first survey was undertaken in 1950s CE, followed by the second survey between 1981 and 1985 CE, immediately after the Cultural Revolution. The third survey was completed during the five years between 2007 and 2011 CE. For the Cultural Relics Survey efforts and the administration of cultural relic sites, see Lin Jia and Zhang Fengwu 2012a; id. 2012b. It is reported that the fourth survey is currently under preparation and will be carried out soon. and was “thoroughly restored” by the Cultural Relics Bureau in 1974 - 1975 CE (Gao Tian 2011). The restoration claimed to have preserved the wooden framework of the Main Hall while “reconstructing” the platform, eave, roof, walls, doors and windows to its “original state” (Qi Yingtao and Chai Zejun 1980, 72-74). However, there are no reliable sources for such reconstructions other than the date “the third year of the Jianzhong era of the Great Tang (大唐建中三年)” seen in a Tang dynasty inscription. In other words, there wasn't much research to sort out the complex construction layers of the building, and the result of this “reconstruction” was ultimately predetermined by the date of this inscription and what scholars believe a Tang dynasty temple *should* look like.

front of him. Similar to the Foguangsi, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra are shown mounted on their *vāhanas*, each with two standing Bodhisattvas and two attendants.<sup>614</sup> A pair of Heavenly Kings stood on the two protruding ends of the altar. (Figures 19 & 20)

In a brief description of the Nanchansi sculptures, Li Song noted that the three main statues were all covered with golden paint, which symbolized their equal significance.<sup>615</sup> At the Foguangsi, however, whereas the face of Mañjuśrī was painted gold, it contrasted the pale complexion of Samantabhadra. It is hard to determine whether the emphasis was put forth in later renovations or actually had a basis in earlier designs. Either way, devotional practice incentivizing artistic liberty would not be a surprise given the prominent cult of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai, especially considering that it had been a standard practice for showing the true presence of the deity with his “golden countenance”. In Kaicheng 開成 5 (840 CE), Ennin recorded paying reverence to a Mañjuśrī statue housed on the first story inside the Golden Pavilion built by Amoghavajra under Emperor Daizong, and noted that the Bodhisattva’s “countenance of golden hue is majestic beyond compare”.<sup>616</sup> When visiting the Bodhisattva Cloister of the Avataṃsaka Monastery, Ennin recorded the personal story told by monk Nianchi 念持 (d.u.), who said he made Mañjuśrī’s statue after

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<sup>614</sup> Having two attendants instead of four is the main difference between earlier presentations of Mañjuśrī and a so-called “new model Mañjuśrī (新樣文殊)” that gained popularity since the Five Dynasties period, seen at the Mañjuśrī Hall of Foguangsi, for example. Despite both having the two attendants, their positions differ at the Nanchansi and the Foguangsi. The former had both of them standing on one side of the Bodhisattva, while the latter arranged them on separate sides. Another major distinction was found in the postures of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. At the Nanchansi, they sat cross-legged on a lotus-petal throne saddle on their mounts, in contrast to the Foguangsi where they sat with one leg folded and the other leg pendant.

<sup>615</sup> Li Song 2006, 371-372.

<sup>616</sup> Bai Huawen et al., annot. 2007, 294; Edwin O. Reischauer trans. 1955, 252.

the Bodhisattva showed his “golden countenance” in a revelation. According to Nianchi, his statue of “true presence” became the prototype for all other Mañjuśrī statues in the Wutai area.<sup>617</sup>

#### INTEGRATING THE AVATAṂSAKA TRINITY AND THE COSMIC TRIAD

The presence of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra in the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi reflected the significance that the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* had in this region during the Tang dynasty. However, instead of appearing as an Avataṃsaka Trinity group with Vairocana, the pair of Bodhisattvas flanked three Buddhas housed in the center of the altar. This alternation is important on several levels. First and foremost, although the idea of multiple Buddhas was already present in early Buddhist texts, it was greatly extended by the Mahāyāna tradition,<sup>618</sup> specifically in the Avataṃsaka cosmology, which regards Vairocana as the absolute, transcendent Buddha presiding over all other Buddhas in the universe, often denoted with the term “all Buddhas of the Ten Directions and Three Periods (十方三世一切佛)” in the scripture.<sup>619</sup> As early as in the Northern Dynasties, practitioners of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* have incorporated Buddhas of the “Ten Directions (十方)” and “Three Periods (三世)” in arts to visualize the cosmological dimension of this doctrine. Most notably, the principle deity Vairocana had been grouped with Maitreya 弥勒 and Amitābha 弥陀 (var. 阿弥陀, Infinite Light 無量光; considered the same Buddha as

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<sup>617</sup> Bai Huawen et al., annot. 2007, 275-276; Edwin O. Reischauer trans. 1955.

<sup>618</sup> Sadakata Akira 1997, 143-144

<sup>619</sup> See T09n0278, 0746, for instance.

Amitāyus, or Infinite Life 無量壽<sup>620</sup>) to form a trio, and the combination may find explanations in regarding Maitreya and Amitābha as representations of the Ten Worlds and the Three Periods respectively, as articulated by Jizang 吉藏 (549-623 CE),<sup>621</sup> a Buddhist master and prolific writer:

Mahāyāna Buddhism fully comprehends the transformation of the Buddhas of the ten directions and the transformation of the Buddhas of the three periods. These two kinds of ideas are what Mahāyāna Buddhism manifests. Therefore, this is consistent. 大乘具明十方佛化及三世佛化。此兩種皆是大乘中所明，故是通也。<sup>622</sup>

[...] The two scriptures demonstrated two approaches to the dharma. The Contemplation on Amitāyus<sup>623</sup> distinguishes the transformation of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and the Maitreya Sūtras<sup>624</sup> fully comprehends the transformation of the Buddhas of the three periods. The transformation of the Buddhas of the ten directions is a horizontal (i.e. spatial) transformation, and the transformation of the Buddhas of the three periods is a vertical (i.e. temporal) transformation.

[...] 有此之二經。明兩種教化也。無量觀辨十方佛化。彌勒經明三世佛化。十方佛化即是橫化。三世佛化即是豎化。言彌勒經三世豎化者。過去七佛。現在釋迦。未來彌勒。明三佛化。故是豎化也。言無量壽觀十方橫化者。此方穢土釋迦化。西方淨土無量壽化。明十方佛化。故是橫化也。<sup>625</sup>

Jizang certainly was not the creator of the “Vairocana-Maitreya-Amitābha” trio.

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<sup>620</sup> See Karashima Seishi 2009, 121-123

<sup>621</sup> For the significance of Jizang’s writings on Buddhist cosmology, see Chen Huaiyu 2007, 105-106.

<sup>622</sup> Annotations to the Contemplation on Amitāyus Sūtra 觀無量壽經義疏 (T37n1752), 0236a.

<sup>623</sup> The “Contemplation on Amitāyus” refers to the visualization practice on Amitāyus promoted by a number of sūtras, such as the *Contemplation on Amitāyus Sūtra Pronounced by the Buddha* 佛說觀無量壽佛經 (T12n365), translated under the Liu-Song of the Southern Dynasties.

<sup>624</sup> The *Maitreya Sūtras* probably refer to the entire group of circulating sūtras centered around Maitreya, most notably the two major texts: first, on the “ascending of Maitreya (彌勒上生)”, such as the *Contemplation on Bodhisattva Maitreya’s Ascent into the Tuṣita Heaven Pronounced by the Buddha* 佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經 (T14n0452), translated under the Song of the Southern Dynasties period; and second, the “descending of Maitreya (彌勒下生)”, such as the *Sūtra of Maitreya’s Descent Pronounced by the Buddha* 佛說彌勒下生經 (T14n453), translated during the Western Jin period.

<sup>625</sup> Annotations to the Contemplation on Amitāyus Sūtra 觀無量壽經義疏 (T37n1752), 0236a.



Nevertheless, his writings elucidated this proliferating aspect of the Buddhist visual culture of his time that was designed to capture the inconceivable spatial and temporal dimensions of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which hereafter is referred as the Cosmic Triad.

Several examples of the Cosmic Triad survived from the Northern Dynasties period. The Central Grotto of Xiaonanhai 小南海, located near the Northern Qi capital city of Ye, was built as a meditation cave for Sengchou 僧稠 (480-560 CE), and the principle statues carved as bias-reliefs inside the cave adopted this very formula.<sup>626</sup> (Figure 21) From the accompanying inscriptions, it is clear that the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* was a central text for Sengchou's Buddhist practices. A statue of Vairocana was carved in high relief on the central wall inside the grotto, with Maitreya and Amitābha presented with their associated Pure Land, namely the Tuṣita Heaven and the Western Paradise of Sukhāvātī on two side walls. The Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟 located in the nearby Mount Bao 寶山 featured the same combination, completed slightly later in Kaihuang 9 (589 CE) of the Sui dynasty by the monk Lingyu 靈裕 (517-605 CE).<sup>627</sup> (Figure 22) The Cosmic Triad was frequently evoked during the Tang dynasty. At Mogao Cave 329, while the central deity was

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<sup>626</sup> The Buddhist statues are not clearly labeled in the Central Grotto of Xiaonanhai (Henan Sheng Gudai Jianzhu Baohu Yanjiusuo 1991). However, scholars have reached a consensus regarding the identification of its iconography, since a verse was carved near the entrance of the cave, praising the arrival of Vairocana Buddha in the meditation grotto. See Eileen Hsu 1999.

<sup>627</sup> The three Buddhist statues are identified with inscriptions, as “Vairocana Buddha 盧舍那佛”, “Amitābha Buddha 阿彌陀佛” and “Maitreya Buddha 彌勒佛”. In a longer inscription carved on the exterior of the cave, their identities were again confirmed as “one niche for the World Honored Vairocana (盧舍那世尊一龕)”, “one niche for the World Honored Amitābha (阿彌陀世尊一龕)”, and “one niche for the World Honored Maitreya (彌勒世尊一龕)”. This time, the Vairocana statue was fashioned as the “Embodiment of the Dharma Realm (法界人中)”, a distinct model that fully demonstrates the cosmological breath of Vairocana, with images of different Buddhist realms illustrated on his robe. See Lai, P'eng-chu 2007, 1-6.

represented in sculptural forms, two “transformative murals (經變)” depicting the Tuṣita Heaven and Western Paradise covered two sidewalls, showing Maitreya and Amitābha’s presence in pictorial form.<sup>628</sup> In the following discussion, I will demonstrate that the three Buddhas housed in the Foguangsi most likely followed this Cosmic Triad arrangement.

The central Buddha housed at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi was accompanied by six attendants, including Ananda and Mahākāśyapa, two standing Bodhisattvas and two kneeling Bodhisattvas, which set him apart from two Buddhas on his left and right, who only have Bodhisattvas attending them. (Figure 23) The central Buddha wears his garment with the right arm and shoulder exposed, in contrast to the other two Buddhas who wore inner and outer pieces of garments that fully covered their upper body. He seats cross-legged on a square throne, with his right hand extends downward in the touching earth *mudrā*, and his left hand rests on his lap with palm facing upward. In a restoration that took place sometime between 1922-1925 CE, an alms bowl was added, placed to on top of the Buddha’s left hand.<sup>629</sup> (Figure 26) Nevertheless, it was almost certain that the original design should not have a bowl in the picture, since all other traits of this image invites comparison with a model possessing this distinct posture and attire that rapidly gained currency during Empress Wu’s reign. As previous scholars have pointed out, it was a newly

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<sup>628</sup> The same combination was also adopted at Mogao Caves 445 and 172, and remained popular during the Turfan period, as seen in Cave 25 of the Yulin Grotto 榆林窟 in Dunhuang.

<sup>629</sup> The alms bowl was not shown in Ono Genmyō’s photography taken in 1922, but was shown in the Meilixing Photo Studio photographs taken in 1925 CE (Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1928a, vol.5, 26 and 28). The addition was quite misleading, which evokes the iconography of the Healing Buddha who has often been depicted in the same posture holding a medicine bowl. Toh Lam Huat has also taken note of this change (Toh Lam Huat 2010).

introduced model from India, based on an iconic statue then housed in a temple in the ancient Kingdom of Magādha, established near the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment. It was the precursor to the present-day Mahābodhi Temple in Bōdh Gayā, Bihar.<sup>630</sup> The iconic image housed in the temple as well as the popular model inspired by it had been referred by different names historically, including the “Taming Demons Image 降魔像”,<sup>631</sup> the “Newly Enlightened Tathāgata Buddha Image 如來初成佛像”,<sup>632</sup> the “Bodhi Tree Image 菩提像”,<sup>633</sup> or the “Sacred Image on the Diamond Throne 金剛座上尊像”.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> Mizuno Seiichi 1950, 37. Takata Osamu 1954, 42-58; Hida Romi 1986, 155-186; Hida Romi 2011, 91-132. Note that according to Xuanzang, there was an image housed in Nālandā, which was made based on the Mahābodhi original. See the *Journey to the West in the Great Tang* 大唐西域記 (T51n2087), 0924b. Wang Xuance also mentioned that once the Mahābodhi image was completed, it was “widely measured and copied by all Buddhists and laymen (一切道俗規模圖寫)”. See the *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma* 法苑珠林 (T53n2122), 0503a. Both Xuanzang and Wang Xuance mentioned a miraculous tale that the Mahābodhi image was made by an artisan who was actually Maitreya in disguise, therefore the image was said to have captured the Buddha’s “true presence (真容)”. Yijing mentioned travelling to the Mahābodhi Temple 大覺寺 to pay reverence to the “True Presence Image 真容像”. He also reported the monk Lingyun 靈運 drawing a copy of a “True Presence Image under the Bodhi Tree [made by] Maitreya 慈氏真容菩提樹像” at Nālandā. See the *Chronicle of Eminent Monks who Traveled to the West Seeking the Dharma* 大唐西域求法高僧傳 (T51n2066), 0008b.

<sup>631</sup> According to Huijiao, Zhimeng 智猛 (d. u.) who set out to India in Hongshi 弘始 6 (404 CE) during the Later Qin 后秦, was the first to record the Mahābodhi image, to which he made offerings of a jeweled canopy and garment. He referred to the image as the “Taming Demons Image 降魔像”. See *Biographies of Eminent Monks* 高僧傳 (T50n2059), 0343b.

<sup>632</sup> Xuanzang offered the first detailed description of the Mahābodhi image, which he called the “Newly Enlightened Tathāgata Buddha Image 如來初成佛像”. See *Journey to the West in the Great Tang* (T51n2087), 0916a.

<sup>633</sup> *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma* cited a detailed description of the “Image under the Great Bodhi Tree 摩訶菩提樹像” from the now lost text *Travel Records of Wang Xuance* 王玄策行傳 (T53n2122, 0502c). The name was also abbreviated as the “Bodhi Image 菩提像”, or elaborated as the “True Presence Image under the Bodhi Tree 真容菩提樹像”, seen in the *Chronicle of Eminent Monks who Traveled to the West Seeking the Dharma*, where Yijing 義淨 (635-713 CE) wrote about the image housed at Mahābodhi and Nālandā (T51n2066, 0008b).

<sup>634</sup> In the *Travel Records of Wang Xuance* (cited in *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma*), Wang Xuance used the “Sacred Image on the Diamond Throne 金剛座上尊像” as an alternative name for “Image

The hallmark of this new model (hereafter the “Mahābodhi model”) was the touching earth *mudrā*, performed shortly before the enlightenment of the historic Buddha, calling the earth to witness his resolution against temptation and threats from the demon Māra.<sup>635</sup> The diplomat to India dispatched from the Tang court, Wang Xuance 王玄策 (fl. 643-661 CE), was said to have visited the original Mahābodhi statue twice *in situ*,<sup>636</sup> and commissioned a copy from the artisan Song Fazhi 宋法智 (d.u.) to carry back to the Tang capital city, where the image was received with religious frenzy. It was said that “Buddhists and laymen were all eager to copy the image (道俗競模)”.<sup>637</sup> Xuanzang, who also paid reverence to the original Mahābodhi statue as well, was one of the outspoken enthusiasts of the Mahābodhi model, and was said to have commissioned his own copy from Song Fazhi.<sup>638</sup> According to the *Avatamsaka Biographies*, when Empress Wu allowed Divākara 地婆訶羅 (613-687 CE) to return to India, eminent monks of the capital made a jeweled garment for him to bring back and offered to the “Bodhi Tree Image 菩提樹像”,

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under the Great Bodhi Tree” (T53n2122, 0502c). According to the *Buddhist Records of the Kaiyuan Era* 開元釋教錄, when Yijing arrived back in Luoyang in Zhengsheng 證聖 1 (695 CE), the only icon he brought back was a “True Presence Image on the Diamond Throne 金剛座真容” (T55n2154, 0568b). Since Yijing used the term “Diamond Throne 金剛座”, which exclusively refers to the place where Buddha achieved enlightenment, the image he brought back must have been modeled after what he saw in Mahābodhi.

<sup>635</sup> Journey to the West in the Great Tang (T51n2087), 0916b;

<sup>636</sup> Wang Xuance travelled to India three times on diplomatic missions, and visited the Mahabodhi Temple on two of these trips. The first time he visited the temple was around Zhenguan 貞觀 19 (645 CE), when he reportedly erected a stele there (T53n2122, 0503a), and the second time in Xianqing 顯慶 5 (660 CE). According to Takata Osamu, Xuanzang’s arrival at the site may be dated to around (634 CE). See Takata Osamu 1954, 49.

<sup>637</sup> *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma* (T53n2122), 0503a. It has been proposed that the character “摸 (touch)” may be a corruption of “模 (copy)”, so the translation is changed accordingly.

<sup>638</sup> See note 630 above.

presumably referring to the same image housed at Mahābodhi Temple.<sup>639</sup>

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Buddhist images based on the Mahābodhi model, from the eighth century onward, survived in large numbers in China, often with imperial or official associations, such as the central image carved in high relief inside the Northern Cave of Leigutai. (Figures 27) Three similar statues carved in the round were relocated to the Leigutai Caves, probably from the nearby imperial monasteries that are no longer standing.<sup>640</sup> (Figure 28) There had been much debate in order to assign a proper name for this group of statues,<sup>641</sup> however, as Hida Romi has convincingly argued, the Mahābodhi model was quickly absorbed into the Buddhist visual repertoire of the Tang Empire, where it went through iconographic assimilations and where its religious implications became according multifold.<sup>642</sup> Images based on the Mahābodhi model were sometimes celebrated along with other “Indian Buddhas 印度佛像” according to devotional inscriptions,<sup>643</sup> with the Buddhas’ identities remaining vague while their exotic

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<sup>639</sup> T51n2073, 0154c.

<sup>640</sup> See Wen Yucheng 1992, 218-221, and Li Chongfeng 2014b, 529-558, for a discussion of the imperial and official monasteries in the Longmen area.

<sup>641</sup> See Luo Shiping 1991, 51-57; Ku Cheng-mei 1996, 166-182; Lai P’eng-chu 2006, 170-185; Luo Zhao 2012, 466-501; Li Chongfeng 2012, 190-211; Zhang Wenzhuo 2014, 50-53, for example.

<sup>642</sup> Hida Romi 1986, 155-186. Notably, the image became extremely popular in Sichuan area, see Hida Romi 2011.

<sup>643</sup> Buddhist images based on the Mahābodhi model were seen among a group of molded clay plaques commissioned by the eunuch official Yang Sixu 楊思勗 (659?-740 CE, born with the surname Su 蘇). Two lines of inscriptions were stamped on the backside of the images’ plaques: “Indian Buddhas made by Su (a.k.a. Yang Sixu) and others of the Great Tang (印度佛像大唐蘇常侍等共作)”. Sometimes a second patron’s name, Putong 普同, was added. See Hida Romi 1985, 1-18; Hida Romi 2011, 57-71. The Mahābodhi model was also represented among a second group of molded clay plaques, stamped with the inscription “wonderful body of the ultimate reality modeled with clay of merit of the Great Tang (大唐善業泥壓得真如妙色身)”, which was probably associated with the Great Wild Goose Pagoda 大雁塔 in Chang’an (present-day Xi’an, Shanxi province). See Hida Romi 2011, 71-84.

origins were highlighted. (Figure 29) In other cases, the touching earth *mudrā* symbol of the model was simply appropriated by other deities of the Buddhist pantheon.<sup>644</sup>

Additionally, renderings of the Mahābodhi model were not always consistent in their details. Some statues depicted the Buddha using the conventional hairstyle with a collection of short curls, in certain cases with a rounded ornament inset into his topknot as seen at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, while others adorned him with a high crown, and/or with a collar-necklace and armlets. A group of nine bias-relief stone plaques originally made for the Tower of the Seven Jewels clearly demonstrates this high degree of variety.<sup>645</sup> (Figure 30) As Takata Osamu has suggested insightfully, since adorning Buddhist statues was a standard devotional practice in contemporary India, these additional jewelries were probably included by artisans in their drawn templates, and thus directly sculpted on later copies based on the drawings.<sup>646</sup> Indeed, Xuanzang's record of the Mahābodhi model

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<sup>644</sup> For instance, it was noted by Kuno Miki and others that Amitābha, as a prominent figure among popular devotional images found at the Longmen Grotto, was frequently mismatched with the touching earth *mudrā* (Kuno Miki 2002a, 430-439).

<sup>645</sup> A total of 32 stone plaques are known to have survived, first found relocated to the Baoqingsi 寶慶寺 in Xi'an. Therefore, the group was also referred to as the Baoqingsi images. They are now scattered among several collections. In addition to the nine plaques showing the Buddha with the touching earth *mudrā*, there are nine plaques with Buddha performing the bestowing fearlessness *mudrā*, seven showing the pendant-legged Buddha, and seven with the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara. See Hida Romi 2011, 239-296, for more information on the plaques; cf. Yen Chuan-ying 1986.

<sup>646</sup> Takata Osamu 1954, 42-58. Li Chongfeng has pointed out that there may have been more than one template in circulation at the time (Li Chongfeng 2012, 190-211). According to extant records, at least both Wang Xuance and Ling Yun brought back drawings of the Mahābodhi image, and Yijing brought back a sculptural copy (see notes 630-634 above). It is possible that some drawings depicted the adornments, while others only showed the statue itself. In addition to the differences caused by templates, one should also consider the agency of the artisans who were hired to reproduce sculptural images based on a drawing, which may have also contributed to the various representations of the Mahābodhi image seen in China. For drawings used as templates, one such example was preserved in the Dunhuang manuscripts, showing a series of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas spread out on a piece of silk, each flanked by inscribed cartouches. It has been

clearly suggests the adornments as later additions:

[...] the beautified figure of Buddha was seated in the lotus position, with the right foot uppermost, the left hand resting, and the right hand down. [He] was sitting facing the east, and as dignified in appearance as when alive. The throne was 4 *zhang* 2 *chi* high, and 12 *zhang* 5 *chi* broad. The figure was 11 *zhang* 5 *chi* high, with the two knees 8 *zhang* 8 *chi* apart, and the two shoulders 6 *zhang* 2 *chi*. The signs and marks [of a Buddha] were all perfectly drawn. The loving expression of his face was like life, only above his right breast the material was not yet completely rounded off. [...] a necklace of precious stones and jewels was placed above the breast where the work was yet unfinished, whilst on the head [they] placed a diadem of encircling gems, exceedingly rich.<sup>647</sup>

[...] 佛像儼然。結加趺坐。右足居上。左手斂。右手垂。東面而坐。肅然如在。座高四尺二寸。廣丈二尺五寸。像高丈一尺五寸。兩膝相去八尺八寸。兩肩六尺二寸。相好具足。慈顏若真。唯右乳上圖瑩未周。[...] 於是乳上未周填廁眾寶。珠璣寶冠。奇珍交飾。<sup>648</sup>

The Mahābodhi model was not the only example of adorned Buddha images in contemporary Indian. Nevertheless, in the influx of Buddhist art to China, it surfaced as the most celebrated type of adorned Buddha, and was immensely popular during Empress Wu's reign.<sup>649</sup>

Despite various popular reinterpretations of the Mahābodhi model, it is still possible to examine this visual icon as perceived by the highest social tier, namely imperial patrons

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pointed out that the group was used to reproduce sculptural images worshipped at various sacred sites in India (Benjamin Rowland Jr. 1947, 5-20; id. 1961, 20-24). Two segments of the original silk painting are preserved in the British Museum and the New Delhi National Museum respectively (cf. Hida Romi 2011, 313, fig. 104). The latter segment is better preserved, and two of the 11 remaining images are adorned Buddhas with the touching earth *mudrā*, identified as “Light-emitting Auspicious Image from Magādhā Kingdom of Central India 中天竺摩伽陀國放光瑞像”. For more discussions, see Alexander C. Soper 1965, 349-364; Kuno Miki 2011, 418-419).

<sup>647</sup> Translation modified after Samuel Beal 1884, vol.2, 120-121.

<sup>648</sup> Journey to the West in the Great Tang (T51n2087), 0916a-0916b.

<sup>649</sup> At least it appears to be the case for imperially and officially funded Buddhist projects.

and the scholar monks, who apparently have built their specific narratives around it. An important context in understanding the image lies in the opening chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*,<sup>650</sup> which starts with the moment of enlightenment of the Buddha under the Bodhi tree in Magādha:

Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was in the land of Magādha, in a quiet place for practice at the Bodhimaṇḍa (i.e. site of enlightenment), having just realized true awareness. [...] A boundless host of enlightening beings, the congregation at the site of enlightenment, was all gathered there. By means of the ability to manifest the lights and inconceivable sounds of the Buddhas, they fashioned nets of the finest jewels, from which came forth all the realms of action of the spiritual powers of the Buddhas, and in which were reflected images of the abodes of all beings. Also, by virtue of the aid of the spiritual power of the Buddha, they embraced the entire cosmos in a single thought. [...] At that time, the Buddha, the World Honored One, in this setting, attained supreme, correct awareness of all things. His knowledge entered into all Three Periods with complete equanimity. His body filled all worlds. His voice universally accorded with all lands in the Ten Directions. [...] <sup>651</sup>

如是我聞。一時。佛在摩竭提國阿蘭若法菩提場中。始成正覺。[...] 無邊菩薩道場眾會咸集其所。以能出現諸佛光明不思議音。摩尼寶王而為其網。如來自在神通之力所有境界皆從中出。一切眾生居處屋宅。皆於此中現其影像。又以諸佛神力所加。一念之間。悉包法界。[...] 爾時。世尊處于此座。於一切法成最正覺。智入三世悉皆平等。其身充滿一切世間。其音普順十方國土。 [...] <sup>652</sup>

The *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, as well, spoke about the moment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, and the oneness of the historic Buddha Śākyamuni and the ultimate Buddha Vairocana.<sup>653</sup>

The Buddha Vairocana was greatly delighted, and manifested a meditation named

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<sup>650</sup> Kim I-na is the earliest to point out this possible link between the Mahābodhi image and the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (Kim I-na 1989, 270-336).

<sup>651</sup> Translation modified after Thomas Cleary 1993, 55-56.

<sup>652</sup> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (T10n0279), 0001b-0001c.

<sup>653</sup> See note 606 above.



“the originally-enlightened constantly-dwelling *Dharma* body whose nature is light pervading like the ether”, and disclosed to those present:

“O sons of the Buddha, listen carefully, think carefully, and then practice. I practiced the ‘stages of [the development of the] mind’ for a hundred incalculable eons and, for this reason, succeeded in eliminating [the qualities of] the ordinary being, achieved correct enlightenment, and then came to be called Vairocana. I dwell in the ocean of worlds contained in a lotus flower. The flower is vast and endowed with a thousand leaves. Each leaf consists of one world-system, and they form a thousand world-systems in all. I created a thousand Śākyamuni in each of the thousand world-systems. Then each world-system has a billion Mt Sumerus, a billion Bodhisattvas. One Śākyamuni sits under [each of] a billion Bodhi trees [by creating a billion bodies] and preaches the Bodhisattva’s stages of [the development of the] mind about which you ask. Just like him, each of the other nine hundred and ninety-nine Śākyamuni creates [a billion Śākyamunis, thus there are] a trillion Śākyamunis [in all]. The Buddhas on the thousand [lotus] flowers are my bodies of transformation. The trillion Śākyamunis are bodies of transformation created by the thousand Śākyamunis. I myself am the very root and called “the Buddha Vairocana”.<sup>654</sup>

爾時盧舍那佛即大歡喜。現虛空光體性本原成佛常住法身三昧。示諸大眾：是諸佛子。諦聽。善思修行。我已百阿僧祇劫修行心地。以之為因。初捨凡夫成等正覺。號為盧舍那。住蓮花臺藏世界海。其臺周遍有千葉。一葉一世界為千世界。我化為千釋迦據千世界。後就一葉世界。復有百億須彌山。百億日月。百億四天下。百億南閻浮提。百億菩薩釋迦坐百億菩提樹下。各說汝所問菩提薩埵心地。其餘九百九十九釋迦。各各現千百億釋迦亦復如是。千花上佛是吾化身。千百億釋迦是千釋迦化身。吾已為本原。名為盧舍那佛。<sup>655</sup>

With the popularity of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, the newly introduced Mahābodhi model from India was conveniently adopted to visualize this iconic enlightenment scene. The Northern Cave of Leigutai, for example, featured the central Buddha presented in the Mahābodhi model, who was then surrounded by smaller images of

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<sup>654</sup> Translation modified after Ōtake Susumu 2012, 49.

<sup>655</sup> T24n1484, 0997c.

Bodhisattvas kneeling on lotuses covering the walls and the ceiling,<sup>656</sup> symbolizing the enlightened beings that have gathered for the moment of the Buddha's enlightenment.<sup>657</sup>

(Figures 31 & 32)

It should also be noted that under the reign of Empress Wu and during the enthusiasm for the Mahābodhi model, its liturgical uses also started to make an esoteric turn. It has been noted that the esoteric traditions in Buddhism were developed during the fifth-sixth century in India, and it was under Empress Wu's reign that the first esoteric masters arrived in China. In the following century, with the establishment of the Womb Mandala 胎藏界 and Diamond Mandala 金剛界 by Śubhakarasiṃha 善無畏 (637-735 CE), Vajrabodhi 金剛智 (671-741 CE), Amoghavajra and others,<sup>658</sup> the Vairocana of the Avataṃsaka tradition was transformed into the primary deity in both Mandalas.<sup>659</sup> Vairocana, already seen as an

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<sup>656</sup> Although the sculptures were not well preserved, the central image of the three main high relief Buddhas was still recognizable. The cave interior had been damaged by many later added niches, and now only a portion of the original Bodhisattva sculptures survive. However, based on the interior decoration of the Central and Southern Caves of Leigutai, the Northern Cave very likely had a similar arrangement, with many more small images of Bodhisattvas.

<sup>657</sup> Scholars have pointed out the impact of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* on the visual program of the Southern Cave of Leigutai (Kim I-na 1989, 270-336; Kuno Miki 2002 b, 93-119; Sugiyama Jirō 2002, 1-53; Pae Chin-dal 2003, 157-168, and 220-257; id. 2006, 165-169; Lai P'eng-chu 2006, 170-185). Nevertheless, since in this case, the central Mahābodhi image was relocated to the site from nearby monasteries during late Ming or Qing period, it remains questionable to discuss the later added statue and the relief inside the cave as a coherent design. Kuno Miki has taken note of this and since withdrew her earlier arguments (Kuno Miki 2011, 355-357). For the Northern Cave of Leigutai, since the main images were all directly carved inside the cave, it is possible to discuss the visual context of the Mahābodhi image.

<sup>658</sup> The womb mandala was set forth by the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* 大日經 (T18n848), translated by Śubhakarasiṃha et al. in Kaiyuan 開元 12 (724 CE), while the diamond mandala was expressed through the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* 金剛頂經 (T18n866), translated by Vajrabodhi et al. in Kaiyuan 11 (723 CE).

<sup>659</sup> Henrik H. Sørensen 2011, 90-92. As Watanabe has pointed out, although Japanese esoteric traditions distinguished between Vairocana in the Mahāyāna texts and Mahāvairocana in the esoteric texts, it was not clear that the distinction existed in Medieval China (Watanabe Shōkō 1965, 371-390)

interchangeable deity with Śākyamuni, gained other identities in this esoteric system, including the Supreme Uṣṇīṣa Buddha 尊勝佛頂 avatar, as explained by Śubhakarasiṃha.<sup>660</sup>

In retrospect, this later trend of development had already emerged with the rise of early esoteric traditions during Empress Wu's time in power. Most notably, the rituals surrounding the Uṣṇīṣa Buddha was intertwined with the Mahābodhi model by this time. It has been pointed out that in the *Collected Dhāraṇī Sūtras* compiled by Atikūṭa in Yonghui 5 (654 CE), the “Uṣṇīṣa Buddha Image 佛頂像” closely corresponds with the characteristics of the Mahābodhi model.<sup>661</sup> Additionally, three decades later, the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Mantra for Complete Removal of Sins and Obstacles* 最勝佛頂陀羅尼淨除業障呪經, translated by Divākara under imperial order, highlighted the ritual with the Mahābodhi model as well.<sup>662</sup> With “claiming the demons (降魔)” and “achieving enlightenment (成道)” as two essential aspects of the story behind the Mahābodhi model, Buddhist devotees began to rely on its spiritual potency to pray for warding off evil spirits, repenting wrongdoings, gaining merits and earning salvation for the deceased.<sup>663</sup>

Outside the Northern Leigutai Cave, a small niche numbered 5-32<sup>664</sup> was carved near

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<sup>660</sup> T18n906, 0913c.

<sup>661</sup> T18n0901, 0785c. Atikūṭa's collection of texts, in particular, was regarded as the earliest in the *dhāraṇī* genre that presented a full esoteric system (Ronald M. Davidson 2011, 23-24; Charles D. Orzech 2011, 268-269). For further discussion of the Uṣṇīṣa Buddha Image and related rituals, see Lü Jianfu 1995, 154-200; Nishibayashi Takahiro 2003, 165-195; Luo Zhao 2012, 466-501; Zhang Wenzhuo 2013, 50-53.

<sup>662</sup> T19n0970, 0360c. See also Yamana Shinsei 1998, 85-108.

<sup>663</sup> This is especially the case in the Sichuan area, where the Mahābodhi model had great popularity. See Hida Romi 2011, 121-126.

<sup>664</sup> Niche no. 2071 according to the previous numbering system.

its entrance, its central Buddha was probably made after copying the main icon of the cave.<sup>665</sup> From the preserved inscription, we can get a rare glimpse into such devotional uses of the Mahābodhi model:

The Buddhist disciple Yan Mendong, by imperial order, reverently made [a?] niche with the Bodhi Image and all Bodhisattvas, for the Sage Emperor (i.e. Wu Zetian), the Crown Prince, and all princes, for [my] monk teacher, [my] parents, seven past generations [of my ancestors], and for all sentient beings of the Dharma-realm. [I wish that] by making this image, the merits could reach all common people, and [they] shall emerge from the River of Desire, and attain the state of Buddhahood. In the eighth day of the third month, Dazu 1 (701 CE), [the images were] completed with adornments.

佛弟子閻門冬。奉為聖神皇帝陛下及太子。諸王。師僧。父母。七世亡。法界一切眾生。敬造菩提像龕及諸菩薩。以此造像。功德普及。法界蒼生。俱出愛河。咸生佛果。大足元年三月八日。莊嚴成就。<sup>666</sup>

The votive inscription, as one would expect, highlighted the hope for salvation for the deceased as well as the aspiration for enlightenment for all. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the Leigutai Caves were intimately associated with official monks Fazang, Divākara and others.<sup>667</sup> Not coincidentally, this “*fengwei* (奉為)” inscription points to the high status of its patronage.<sup>668</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> Li Chongfeng 2012, 190-211.

<sup>666</sup> Liu Jinglong and Li Yukun, eds. 1998, 631.

<sup>667</sup> See the section on “Foguangsi at the Turn of Mountain Monastic Tradition” in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>668</sup> For the implication of “*fengwei*” in the inscription, see my previous discussions of the Tang dynasty inscriptions found at the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi.

Li Chongfeng has suggested that the Mahābodhi image was routinely used in imperial Buddhist establishments of the Tang. In addition to the Leigutai Caves, stone sculptures from the Tower of the Seven Jewels and the clay plaques associated with the Wild Goose Pagoda mentioned above were also consumed by imperial and official patrons. For these two groups, Mahābodhi images make up the majority of the remains. Li also mentioned a lost text, entitled “Note on the Bodhi Image 菩提像文”, partially quoted from a Song scholar who attributed it to Empress Wu’s court official Shen Quan 沈佺期 (d. 714 CE), and claimed it was “composed upon imperial decree (奉敕撰)” (Li Chongfeng 2012, 190-211). It should be noted that Pae

Returning to the central Buddha of the Mahābodhi model housed at the Foguangsi Buddha Hall, in addition to its posture and garment, the form and details of its narrow-waisted, square thrones also serves to associate it with the group of the three Leigutai statues. For the Foguangsi statue, four strongmen were preserved decorating the Buddhist throne, and a precious piece of a mural has been retrieved from its backside, indicating that the Four Heavenly Kings were originally represented on the throne as well, but in painted forms.<sup>669</sup> (Figure 33) Marilyn M. Rhie has correctly identified the image as a representation of the Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa 毗沙門天王, guardian of the north, seated on two demons and accompanied by a *devī* as well as an entourage of *yakṣas* who also appear to be taming demons.<sup>670</sup> The mural must have belonged to an original set of four,

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Chin-dal has pointed out another important piece of evidence. She discussed a stone pestal in the collection of the Xi'an Beilin Museum 西安碑林博物館, bearing an inscription that recorded the commission of Mahābodhi images 菩提像 by monks of the Western Chongfusi 西崇福寺 in Shenlong 神龍 2 (706 CE). I was not able to see the original inscription, but according to Pae, it was recorded that the Mahābodhi images were then delivered and housed in the Avatamsaka Pagoda 華嚴塔 of the Avatamsaka Monastery 華嚴寺 located in the Western Capital area (Pae Chin-dal 2006, 166-167). Firstly, both the Western Chongfusi and the Avatamsaka Monastery in Chang'an were associated with Fazang. The former monastery was a Tang imperial monastery directly associated with the court. The establishment of the latter monastery was reportedly proposed by Fazang upon the completion of the newly translated eighty-fascial *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. Secondly, given the particular location chosen for the replacement of the images, the inscription further strengthens the possible link between Mahābodhi images and the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*.

<sup>669</sup> Luo Zhewen 1965, 31-35. The mural was only preserved because it is positioned directly facing the partition wall at the back of the altar and subsequently escaped repainting and renovation.

<sup>670</sup> Marilyn M. Rhie went to suggest the *devī* represents “Mahāśrī 吉祥天”, the wife of Vaiśravaṇa (Marilyn M. Rhie 1970, 94). However, such an identification may be problematic since the combination of Mahāśrī and Vaiśravaṇa as a pair did not appear until much later. It is interesting to note that Vaiśravaṇa was depicted on the eastern side (backside), inside of the northern side of the throne. As I explain in later discussions, Rhie's identification is correct, despite this mismatch of orientation, which was perhaps caused by the unconventional west-facing orientation of the Buddha Hall and its statues. In a conventional south-facing setting, the backside of the throne would be the northern side. Therefore, it is likely that Vaiśravaṇa was customarily placed on the backside of the throne as a result of the usually south-facing orientation. This mural image has been discussed together with a stylistically similar painting on silk, identified as “Heavenly King Virūpākṣa, [guardian of] the west 西方毗樓博叉天王” by inscription, found among the Dunhuang

painted on all four sides of the throne.<sup>671</sup> However, the other three panels are now lost, covered by numerous repaintings from later dynasties. The statues carved in the round, found at Leigutai, Longmen Grotto, also had central sections originally decorated with the Four Heavenly Kings on four sides and strongmen on the four corners.<sup>672</sup>

Having established that the central Buddha of the Foguangsi Buddha Hall was based on the Mahābodhi model, questions remain concerning his identity, which could not be fully answered without examining the Buddhas placed on both his sides. The statue placed on his north (next to Mañjuśrī) very likely represents the Amitābha Buddha, seated cross-legged on a lotus-petal throne, with both hands performing the preaching *mudrā* in front of his chest. (Figure 25) Amitābha was rendered in a fashionable posture here, also newly introduced from India in the early Tang period.<sup>673</sup> At Mogao Cave 220, for example, the mural on its southern wall depicts the *Contemplation on the Amitāyus Sūtra*, showing

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manuscripts and dated to Dashun 大顺 1 (890 CE). Shin Shim Yeoung has suggested that the guardian deity in the Foguangsi mural should also be identified as Virūpākṣa (Shin Shim Yeoung 2013, Figure 5.13-1), which I do not agree with. With the visual materials I discuss below, it is clear that the Foguangsi mural is indeed Vaiśravaṇa.

<sup>671</sup> When further compared with murals painted on the four interior walls at the underground repository of the Śaṁra Pagoda of the Pure Immaculate Light 無垢淨光舍利塔, located in Shenyang, Liaoning province, dated to the 11th century under the Liao dynasty by inscription (Wang Ju'er 1988, 46-52), it seems to me that both the Foguangsi image and the Dunhuang fragment were a part of a complete set depicting the Four Heavenly Kings. (Figure 34)

<sup>672</sup> Chang Qing 2001, 335-360.

<sup>673</sup> The rendering of Amitābha was by no means rigid during the Tang dynasty. Because of the popularity of the Pure Land ideal, Amitābha was frequently evoked in popular arts, and adopted many different postures and *mudrās*. A case in point is the appropriation of the earth touching *mudrā* from the Mahābodhi model. However, it has been noted that since the Sui and early Tang period, Amitābha was increasingly shown with the teaching *mudrā* and the lotus-petal throne (Mitsumori Masashi 1986; Okada Ken 2000, 159-205). As I will explain, this is especially true in the setting of the Western Pure Land.

Amitābha in such a form, preaching to an assembly of Bodhisattvas.<sup>674</sup> (Figure 35)

Another example comes from mural paintings inside the Kondō of Hōryūji, where Amitābha was also presented in similar iconography, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of this particular form. (Figure 36)

The statue placed to the south of the central Buddha (next to the Samantabhadra) is seated pendant-legged on a square throne, with two lotus-petal pedestals underneath each foot. The Buddha was shown with his right hand half-raised performing a preaching *mudrā*, with his left hand resting on his knee with the palm facing upwards. (Figure 26) The statue conforms to a Maitreya model which, again, gained popularity in the early Tang dynasty, especially during the reign of Emperor Gaozong and Empress Wu.<sup>675</sup> The main statue carved in high relief in the Central Cave of Leigutai, Longmen Grotto, is one among many other Maitreya Buddhas commissioned during the Great Zhou that were presented in such an appearance. (Figure 37) A group of imperially commissioned sculptures associated with the Tower of the Seven Jewels, dated to the early eighth century CE, offers additional examples of Maitreya Buddhas with the same iconography.<sup>676</sup> (Figure 38)

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<sup>674</sup> Examples like this are abundant. Another example is found in Cave 445, and as mentioned above, the Western Pure scene in Cave 445 was paired with a mural of Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven painted on the northern wall.

<sup>675</sup> Maitreya was one of Empress Wu's proclaimed Buddhist avatars. The statue unmistakably represents Maitreya. This pendant-legged appearance marked a clear departure from an earlier model showing him seated cross-ankled, widely adopted during the Northern Dynasties (Dorothy C. Wong 2004, 93-96). Amy McNair pointed out such a change at Longmen Grotto (Amy McNair 2007, 89).

<sup>676</sup> Yen Chuan-ying 1986, 78-84.

## DEVOTIONAL STATUE OF A BUDDHIST PATRON?

The most enchanting statue on the altar depicts a female, who sits quietly on the southern end of the altar attending to the Buddhist assembly. (Figure 39) This sculpture was evidently different from the rest of the magnificent statues for its humble, life-sized rendering. Liang Ssu-ch'eng suggested it might have been made to represent the "Offering Deliverance Commissioner from the Superior Capital 上都送供" and the "Benefactor of the Buddha Hall 佛殿主", Ning Gongyu.<sup>677</sup> Although there was no inscriptional evidence to support such an identification, it has nonetheless been regarded as definitive. A rare challenger to this idea, Toh Lam Huat, has pointed out that the unique attire of the female is more akin to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī in the assembly, rather than appearing to be a secular patron.<sup>678</sup> Indeed, she was depicted wearing a jacket with attached collars and

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<sup>677</sup> A major basis for Liang's identification of the female statue as a portrait of Ning Gongyu was its association with another statue housed in the Buddha Hall, believed to be a portrait of the monk Yuancheng. Liang noted that it would be reasonable to have two statues of the benefactors of the Buddha Hall accompanying the main group of statues of a Buddhist assembly (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944). Nevertheless, in addition to my discussions concerning the specific position, posture and attire of the female statue that would problematize such an identification, Liang's argument is also undermined by the following two points concerning the so-called "statue of Yuancheng". To begin with, the monk statue was unlikely a portrait of Yuancheng. As I have mentioned, the Buddha Hall was originally built with an open portico, and the position of the seated monk statue placed in the portico space under the window of the northern end bay suggests it was a later addition, mostly likely placed there after the portico space was closed in the renovation that took place during the Ming dynasty. In addition, it was not the only monk statue housed inside the Buddha Hall. On the other side of the hall, a group of four statues were placed under the window of the southern end bay, each with a separate plinth. Their rounded contours with robes loosely clinging to their bodies poise a clear contrast to the heavy garments and exaggerated draperies of the arhat statues, suggesting that they were not a part of the five hundred arhat group but monk statues made on separate occasions. All five monks statues were probably added or relocated to the Buddha Hall after the Ming renovation, and it is problematic to single out one of them and identify it as a "statue of Yuancheng" without any epigraphic evidence.

<sup>678</sup> Toh Lam Huat 2010. Toh went on to suggest the female figure is the goddess *Prthivī* 堅牢地神, which is also highly speculative. Liang Ssu-ch'eng discussed the clothing style of the sculpture in his 1944 report by making a comparison with the dresses wore by figures seen on the stone sarcophagus of Wang Jian 王建



tassel fringe decorated half-sleeves, over a long-sleeved garment with wide sleeves and an inner layer of a plain undergarment. Her full regalia was completed with a “cloud shoulder cape (霞帔)”, a jade belt, and a cord necklace draped around her neck, which may indicate a long pendant worn on the back. (Figure 40)

The appearance of this female figure bears a striking resemblance to another mysterious female shown in a piece of embroidery that belongs to Kajūji 勧修寺, but which was most likely made in the Tang court and transmitted to Japan.<sup>679</sup> (Figure 41) The Kajūji female is shown along at the bottom section of the image only with the sight of her back. Nevertheless, her position on the central axis, which directly faces the dominant Buddhist figure, suggests her significant status in the scene. She is dressed in a short-sleeved vermilion jacket with green tassel fringes, a vermilion outer garment, and a long plain inner garment. The sight of her back allows the long decorative pendant to be fully displayed, whereas the same decoration is only suggested in the Foguangsi female by the cord necklace shown in the frontal viewpoint. The Foguangsi female statue was placed closest to the pendant-legged Buddha. Similarly, the Buddha whom the Kajūji female faces in the embroidery is also seated pendant-legged, with the same hand positions and preaching *mudrā*.

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(847-918 CE), the king of the Former Shu 前蜀 (907-925 CE) of the Five Dynasties period, whose tomb was found in Chengdu 成都, Sichuan 四川 province (cf. Feng Hanji 1964). Liang believed the similarities between these two groups suggest this kind of dress was quite commonly worn at that time (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944). However, he overlooked the fact that the figures depicted on the Wang Jian sarcophagus were celestial musicians, not worldly figures. Indeed, this kind of dress, as I describe below, was often seen on female deities.

<sup>679</sup> Hida Romi 1994, 61-88.

An understanding of the Kajūji female character will undoubtedly shed light on the possible identity of the Foguangsi female. Although there is no definitive conclusion due to a similar absence of an inscription, decades of Japanese scholarship has sketched out some very convincing interpretations. Firstly, it appears that the Kajūji embroidery belongs to a group of imperially commissioned devotional objects, most likely made during Empress Wu's time in power. Among the records collected at the Shōsōin 正倉院, a fragmentary note mentioned “a devotional verse (願文一首)”, and explained its context as:

On the fourth day of the twelfth month, Chuigong 2 (686 CE), Empress of the Great Tang, by imperial order, reverently made one thousand pieces of embroidered eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, for the Great Emperor Gaozong.

垂拱二年十二月四日。大唐皇后。奉為高宗大帝。敬造繡十一面觀世音菩薩一千鋪。<sup>680</sup>

Hida Romi has suggested that since doing Buddhist themed “feminine arts” was a popular way to gain merits among female devotees, it is not surprising that Empress Wu engaged in such projects; however, based on the scale of the embroidery productions, she probably sponsored imperial workshops chiefly devoted to this cause.<sup>681</sup>

In addition, according to the Japanese scholar official Miyoshi Kiyotsura 三善清行 (847-918 CE), Enchin 圓珍 (a.k.a. Master Chishō 智證大師, 814-891 CE) met with Deyuan 德圓 (fl. 8th c. CE), a monk from the palace chapel, during his travels in the Tang Empire in mid-ninth century.<sup>682</sup> After Enchin returned to Japan, Deyuan fulfilled an

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<sup>680</sup> This line appeared under the title “Devotional Verse for upon the Commission of Bodhisattva [embroideries], No. 8 造菩薩願文卷第八”, the verse itself is lost.

<sup>681</sup> Hida Romi 1994, 61-88.

<sup>682</sup> Like other Japanese monks who travelled to the Tang, Enchin also kept an extensive travelogue. However, his writing was only preserved in fragments. See Bai Huawen et al annot. 2003.

agreement between them by sending four pieces of embroideries with the help of a Chinese merchant Zhan Jingquan 詹景全 (fl. 8th c. CE), and these embroideries were reportedly commissioned by the “Empress Zetian”:

In [Jōgan] 9 (867 CE), Deyuan, the Lecture Master of the Inner Palace Chapel from Wen prefecture of the Tang [Empire], [sent the following items] through Zhan Qingquan from the Wu prefecture, which belongs to a group of four hundred pieces of embroideries [commissioned by] the Empress Zetian and bestowed to the entire [Tang] Empire:

One piece of Transformative Tableau of the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss (2 *zhang* 4 *chi* long and 1 *zhang* 5 *chi* wide);

One piece of Transformative Tableau of the Pure Land of Mount Grdhrakūta (1 *zhang* 5 *chi* long and 1 *zhang*); and

Two pieces of portraits of [monks] entrusted with the dharma, going back to the monk Mahākāśyapa and up to Huineng of the Tang (4 *zhang* wide each).

[貞觀]<sup>683</sup>九年。唐溫州內道場供奉德圓座主。付婺<sup>684</sup>州人詹景全。向國之便<sup>685</sup>贈則天皇后縫繡四百副之內。極樂淨土變一鋪。長二丈四尺。廣一丈五尺。織繪靈山淨土變一鋪。長一丈五尺。廣一丈。付法藏<sup>686</sup>上自釋迦葉下至唐慧能之影像二幀子。各廣四丈。<sup>687</sup>

The Kajūji embroidery would belong to the genre of transformative tableaux.

Nevertheless, based on the content of the Kajūji embroidery, it does not seem to be one of the two transformative tableaux pieces sent by Deyuan.<sup>688</sup> It was perhaps among the four

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<sup>683</sup> “Jōgan 貞觀” here refers to a reign name used by the Japanese Emperor Seiwa 清和天皇 (r. 858-876 CE), not to be confused with the “Zhenguan” reign of Emperor Taizong (r. 627-649 CE) of the Tang dynasty.

<sup>684</sup> “Wu 務” is probably a mistake of “Wen 婺”.

<sup>685</sup> It seems that “*bian* 便” (conveniently) is a corruption of “*bian* 遍” (pervasively).

<sup>686</sup> “[Monks] entrusted with the dharma 付法藏” here refers to the orthodox lineage of monks who received the teaching from the Buddha, derived from the *Biographies of [Monks] Entrusted with the Dharma* 付法藏因緣傳 (T50n2058). Not to be confused with the monk named Fazang.

<sup>687</sup> Miyoshi Kiyotsura, *Biography of Enchin, The Lecture Master at Enryakuji of the Tendai Sect* 天台宗延曆寺座主圓珍傳 (Onjōji Jimusho eds. 1978, vol.3, 1364-1380); punctuation is my own.

<sup>688</sup> The Kajūji embroidery has traditionally been identified as “Śākyamuni Preaching on Grdhrakūta (the Vulture Peak) 釋迦靈鷲山說法圖”, which is no longer considered accurate. Hida Romi was among the first to raise questions concerning the old identification. For detailed discussions of her opposition, see Hida Romi 1994, 61-88.

hundred works that were not mentioned here, or made in a separate but similar devotional project commissioned by Empress Wu.<sup>689</sup>

Inamoto Yasuo has made an important observation regarding the theme of the Kajūji embroidery, suggesting that the scene may in fact depict the Buddha's preaching to his mother Queen Māyā,<sup>690</sup> an episode based on the text entitled *Sūtra of Great Māyā* 摩訶摩耶經, first translated into Chinese in the fifth century.<sup>691</sup> It was said that after the Buddha achieved enlightenment, he stayed three months in the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven 忉利天 (a.k.a. the Thirty-three Heavens 三十三天) to visit his mother. Not coincidentally, the posture of the preaching Buddha in the Kajūji embroidery could also represent the so-called "King Udayana's Image [of the Buddha] 優填王像", whose origin was derived from a different account of the same event. According to the *Ekottara Āgama* 增壹阿含經, during the Buddha's three-month visit to his mother, his lay follower King Udayana 優填王 missed him intensively, and it was under the King's instruction that the first image of the Buddha was made.<sup>692</sup> Rendered in various ways in the Northern and Southern Dynasties period,<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>689</sup> Hida Romi 1994, 61-88.

<sup>690</sup> Inamoto Yasuo 1997, 357-509; id. 2013, 111-149.

<sup>691</sup> T12n383. The apocryphal text is probably of Central Asian origin (Durt Hubert 1996, 6-8), and the translation was attributed to Tanjing 曇景 (fl. 479-502 CE), active under the Qi 齊 of the Southern Dynasties. The *sūtra* also went by an alternative title, the "*Sūtra of Buddha Ascending to the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven to Preach for His Mother* 佛昇忉利天為母說法經". However, there is an earlier *sūtra* with the same title (T17n815), translated by Dharmarakṣa under the Western Jin, whose contents are quite different.

<sup>692</sup> T02n0125, 0705c-0708b. The translatorship of the *Ekottara Āgama* is still debated (see Su Ken 2013, 198-200). However, by all means, the text was translated into Chinese by the late fourth century.

<sup>693</sup> See Hida Romi 2011, 133-148, for a review on the various textual narrative and visual representation traditions concerning King Udayana's Image of the Buddha. In addition to the pendent-legged seated appearance, another popular way of portrayal depicted the Buddha as standing upright. Most notably, the sandalwood statue transmitted to Japan by monk Chōnen 喬然 (d. 1016) followed this standing posture. Chōnen modeled his image based on a statue housed at the Kaiyuansi 開元寺 in Yangzhou 揚州 made in

the King Udayana model became almost identical with the pendant-legged Maitreya Buddha and surfaced as an extremely popular image in the late seventh century, especially around the Luoyang region.<sup>694</sup> On top of its à la mode Indian origin, the King Udayana model was valued as the first ever representation of the Buddha, and was said to have captured his true presence.<sup>695</sup> Most significantly, however, the story behind its making highlighted ideal Buddhist kingship, and not coincidentally, its time of popularity directly corresponded with Empress Wu's thirty years in power.<sup>696</sup>

However, just as the seating Buddha who may present both the coming of Maitreya and the ideal *śakravartin* rule of King Udayana, there may have been multiple layers of meaning to the female figure, in addition to her possible identity as Queen Māyā.

Fukuyama Toshio has long claimed she is obviously a representation of Empress Wu

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Changxing 長興 3 (933 CE) of the Later Tang dynasty, which in turn was based on yet another image, then housed in the Northern Song imperial city, reportedly transmitted into China through Kucha.

<sup>694</sup> Wen Yucheng estimated about 100 extant images based on the King Udayana model in the Longmen and Gongxian 鞏縣 Grotto, Henan province (Wen Yucheng 1992a, 172-217).

<sup>695</sup> Hida Romi 2011, 148-153. Depending on the specific record, the introduction of the King Udayana model into China had been credited to different figures by the early Tang, including Emperor Ming (28-75 CE) of the Eastern Han, Kumārajīva (d. 413 CE), active during the Sixteen Kingdoms period, and Emperor Wu (464-549 CE) of the Liang during the Southern Dynasties. Xuanzang's record on King Udayana's Image of the Buddha in his *Journey to the West in the Great Tang* (T51n2087, 0898a) was a direct boost to its popularity. According to a catalogue compiled by Bianji 辯機 (619-649 CE) and appended to the *Journey to the West in the Great Tang* (T51n2087, 0946c), and the *Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master* (T50n2053, 0252b) written by Huili 慧立 and Yancong 彦棕, among the seven Buddhist images Xuanzang brought back, there was a "statue copied after the image of true presence carved into sandalwood by the King Udayana of the Kauśāmbī Kingdom due to [his] deep longing of the Tathāgata 擬憍賞彌國出愛王思慕如來刻檀寫真像". However, Hida Romi has argued that the Xuanzang image was more akin to the "Auspicious Image in Precious Sandalwood from the Kauśāmbī Kingdom of Central India 中天竺憍賞彌寶檀剎瑞像" seen in the Dunhuang silk painting (cf. note 646 above). In other words, Xuanzang's statue adopted the standing posture and was therefore not directly related to the group of King Udayana images found at the Longmen and Gongxian Grotto.

<sup>696</sup> Hamada Tamami 2006, 45-72.

herself, pointing to the spectacle of monks and laypeople who gathered on the left and right sides of the centrally positioned female.<sup>697</sup> Instead of simply rejecting the Empress Wu's identification in favor of Queen Māyā, I argue that the female figure may represent both of them. It has been pointed out that similar to Mañjuśrī,<sup>698</sup> Queen Māyā was among the mother goddesses and exemplary mortal mothers in Empress Wu's pantheon,<sup>699</sup> which serves to explain her immense popularity in the early Tang. In the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* in particular, Queen Māyā was celebrated as the mother of all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Cakravartins. In the "Chapter on Entering into the Realm of Reality", when she met with Sudhana 善財童子 on his spiritual journey inspired by Mañjuśrī, she propagated to him:<sup>700</sup>

Just as I was the mother of this Śākyamuni Buddha in this eon in this world, so was I the mother of the Buddhas Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kashyapa in the past. In the future, when the time comes for Bodhisattva Maitreya to manifest descent from the Tuṣita Heaven, [...] therein, I will be the mother of him as well. [...] I shall also be the mother of all the Buddhas in this eon, and in endless billions of eons. In endless billions of eons, in all penetrating endless universes of the ten directions in this flower treasury ocean of worlds, I see myself as the mother of all who carry on the practice of Samantabhadra's vows, and establish guidance for the perfection of all

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<sup>697</sup> Fukuyama Toshio 1953, 39-40, endnote 76.

<sup>698</sup> Mañjuśrī's status as the mother and father of all Buddhas was pronounced by the Buddha in the *Sūtra of King Ajātaśatru*, see my discussions in the section "The Avataṃsaka Sūtra, the Divine Empress and Her Mañjuśrī Operation" in Chapter 1 of this thesis. There seems to be some intriguing associations between Queen Māyā and Mañjuśrī in the *Sūtra of Great Māyā* as well, since when Buddha visited the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven, Mañjuśrī was the very person sent to inform Queen Māyā of her son's arrival. Moreover, it should be noted that among the Foguangsi group of statues, strikingly similarities are observed between the dress of Queen Māyā and Mañjuśrī. While other Bodhisattvas mostly wore skirts, sashes and shawls, sometimes with a short jacket or half-sleeved gown, both the Mañjuśrī and Queen Māyā statues were shown with full garments, tassel fringed jackets, cloud shoulder caps, and jade belts.

<sup>699</sup> N. Harry Rothschild 2015, 195-208.

<sup>700</sup> It has also been noted that Queen Māyā was the last and probably the most important female figure Sudhana visited during his spiritual journey.

beings in all ages.<sup>701</sup>

如此世界賢劫之中。過去世時。拘留孫佛。拘那含牟尼佛。迦葉佛。及今世尊釋迦牟尼佛現受生時。我為其母。未來世中。彌勒菩薩從兜率天將降神時。[...]我於彼時。亦為其母。[...]在賢劫中。於此三千大千世界。當成佛者。悉為其母。如於此三千大千世界。如是於此世界海十方無量諸世界一切劫中。諸有修行普賢行願。為化一切諸眾生者。我自見身悉為其母。<sup>702</sup>

Referred to as the “Divine Mother 神母” or “Sage Mother 聖母”, Queen Māyā’s designations may have directly inspired the Empress’ choosing her own honorific name, the “Sage Mother and Divine Emperor 聖母神皇”.<sup>703</sup> In the Kajūji embroidery, therefore, it is very likely that in depicting Queen Māyā attending to the preaching of the Buddha, the Empress also availed herself in her position.

At the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi, it is possible that the female statue processes this double-fold identity as well, as both Queen Māyā and Empress Wu. To begin with, it was very common for Buddhist patrons to place themselves as devotees attending a Buddhist assembly. For Empress Wu herself, reportedly an image was made in Chang’an 2 (702 CE) as a substitute pilgrim to be sent to Mount Wutai.<sup>704</sup> However, what has not received due attention is the practice of the use of the measurements of an emperor/empress to make Buddhist statues, often referred to as according to the “true size

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<sup>701</sup> Translation modified after Thomas Cleary 1993, 1437-1438.

<sup>702</sup> T10n0279, 0416b-0417a.

<sup>703</sup> N. Harry Rothschild 2015.

<sup>704</sup> *Expanded Record* (T51n2099), 1107b. Since the source is relatively late, compiled by Yanyi in the Northern Song dynasty, it is not clear how credible this account is. Lei Wen and T. H. Barrett had contended that the record could be supported by the well-known precedent of this kind of imperial activity (Lei Wen 2009, 119-121; T. H. Barrett 2012, 49). Yanyi attributed the commission of the “jade imperial portrait statue (玉御容)” to the officials Hou Zhiyi 侯知一 (fl. 7th-8th c. CE) and Wei Yuanzhong 魏元忠 (d. 707 CE). The image was scheduled to be sent to the Qingliangsi in Chang’an 3 (703 CE), however, the Empress did not grant them permission. In the end, Yanyi said the image was housed in the Chongfusi in Taiyuan.

(等身)”.<sup>705</sup> According to the travelogue of Xuanzang, this practice may have its precedent in India, where at least the King Harṣa Śīlāditya 戒日王 (r. 606-647 CE) reportedly commissioned “a golden statue of the Buddha by using the same measurements of his own body (金佛像量等王身)”.<sup>706</sup> It was attested by both received texts and epigraphic sources that before the time of Empress Wu, Southern Dynasties, Sui and the first three Tang emperors had also been acceding to this praxis.<sup>707</sup> The “true size” images later evolved to process the “imperial physiognomy”, fully transforming the Buddha and the emperor as one and the same.<sup>708</sup>

The undeniable practice of self-reference in this kind of devotional object serves to reinvent the identity of the patron and the icon at the same time, with the Buddhist deities embodying benevolent rulers and the emperor/empress asserting the role of Buddhist avatars. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between Buddhist icons with “true size” or “imperial physiognomy” and ordinary statues or images of patrons. Another case in point is the mural paintings at Mogao Cave 9, dated to the late Tang period. With the *Avatamsaka*

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<sup>705</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng used this exact term to describe the female statue at the Foguangsi. However, Liang has mistaken the term to mean “life-sized” (Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944). Hida Romi offered a very extensive and useful discussion on the practice of commissioning “true size” statues (Hida Romi 2011).

<sup>706</sup> T51n2587, 0895a.

<sup>707</sup> Prince Shōtoku 聖德太子 (572-622 CE), the legendary Buddhist ruler of Japan, also evidently practiced this tradition. The bronze statues housed at Hōryūji feature a main life-sized icon of the Śhakyamuni Buddha, with a Suiko 推古 30 (622 CE) inscription on the back of its mandorla clearly stating that it was a “Śhakyamuni statue made with the measurements of the king’s body (造釋像尺寸王身)”. See Hida Romi 2011. In comparison, the tradition adopted by emperors of the Northern Dynasties favored larger than life-sized statues, for example, the imperial statues of the five Tanyao Caves at the Yungang Grotto were reportedly representation of Buddhist rulers and larger than life-size. See James O. Caswell 1988.

<sup>708</sup> Emperor Ruizong was known to have evoked the tradition of making Buddhist images with “imperial physiognomy (真容)”. Emperor Xuanzong, on the other hand, made images that had both “imperial physiognomy” and “true size”, which also include Daoist statues.



*Sūtra* as one of its main themes, the two walls flanking the cave entrance were painted with Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, each appeared to be in a procession accompanied by celestial beings. One is reminded of another record of Xuanzang, describing a Buddhist procession following a three-week feast that the King Harṣa Śīlāditya held:

From the pleasure palace to the monastery, there were highly decorated pavilions and places where musicians were stationed, who raised the sounds of their various instruments. The kings, on leaving the pleasure palace, paraded a gorgeously caparisoned golden Buddhist statue about three *chi* high that was raised aloft by a great elephant. On the left, the King Śīlāditya dressed as Śakra/Indra, holding a precious canopy, whilst Kumārarāja, dressed as Brahmā, holding a white chāmara, went on the right. Each of them had as an escort of five-hundred war-elephants clad in armor. In front and behind the statue of the Buddha went one hundred great elephants, carrying musicians, who sounded their drums and raised their music. The King Śīlāditya, as he went, scattered on every side pearls and various precious substances, with gold and silver flowers, in honor of the three precious of the Three Jewels.<sup>709</sup>

自行宮屬伽藍。夾道為閣。窮諸瑩飾。樂人不移。雅聲遞奏。王於行宮出一金像。虛中隱起。高餘三尺。載以大象。張以寶幟。戒日王為帝釋之服。執寶蓋以左侍。拘摩羅王作梵王之儀。執白拂而右侍。各五百象軍被鎧周衛佛像前後。各百大象。樂人以乘鼓奏音樂。戒日王以真珠雜寶及金銀諸花。隨步四散供養三寶。<sup>710</sup>

Śakra/Indra and Brahmā as kings of the heaven and earth formed the “permanent couple” flanking the Buddha in the earliest Buddhist visual arts seen in Gandhāra and Mathura.<sup>711</sup>

The tradition remained alive in the early sixth century, as witnessed by Xuanzang in the Kanyakubja Kingdom 羯若鞠闍國, where these two roles were played by Buddhist kings instead.

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<sup>709</sup> Translation modified after Samuel Beal 1884, 218-219.

<sup>710</sup> T51n2587, 0895b.

<sup>711</sup> Lokesh Chandra 1988, 24-25; cf. note 596 above.

Returning to Mogao Cave 9, a male and a female, both dressed as imperial figures, appeared among the celestial procession. (Figure 42) They were previously identified as Śakra/Indra and his consort, and might have embodied imperial rulers as Buddhist devotees as well. The female figure, again, appeared in attire that was very similar to the Foguangsi female statue, including matching details such as the tassel fringes and jade belt. She was also depicted with a disk of light behind her head, signifying her otherworldliness. Although the female also held an incense burner, suggesting her devotion towards the Buddha, her image poses a direct contradiction when compared with the female patrons painted below, who wore mundane clothing and appeared much more insignificant. (Figure 43) Similarly, for both the Kajūji embroidery and the Foguangsi statues, both female figures' attire serves as a strong indication of their supernatural status. In both cases, the female represents Queen Māyā as well as Empress Wu, who was considered a Buddhist patron as well as a Buddhist deity herself.

However, one question remains as for who were the actual commissioners of the Empress Wu embodied as Queen Māyā images. For the Kajūji embroidery, it was very likely produced in Empress Wu's imperial workshops and under her direct instructions. The statues housed at the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi are dated to the mid-seventh century, and given the margin of error for C-14 dating, there may be two possible explanations. First, Empress Wu could be the patron of the image, which would be made relatively late during her reign. Secondly, it is also possible that the image was made during Emperor Zhongzong's time, when the Foguangsi was very likely associated with his

imperial chapels under the same name. In this case, it is only fitting that in equating the late Empress Wu to Queen Māyā, the emperor also glorified himself as the Buddha's incarnation and a universal ruler.

A precedent was already in place comparing the Empress Wu and Emperor Zhongzong to Queen Māyā and the Buddha through the latter's title as the "Prince of Buddha's Radiance 佛光王", for the "divine light filled the courtyard and shot up to light the entire sky" at his birth. It is not a coincidence that Queen Māyā's giving birth to the Buddha was described in the same breath in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*:

At that time I was in the house of King Śuddhodana (i.e. Śhakyamuni's father), and when the time of the Bodhisattva's descent from the heaven of contentment had arrived, from every pore the Bodhisattva emanated as many rays of light as atoms in untold Buddha-lands, arrayed with the qualities of the birth of all enlightening beings, known as the light originating from the qualities of birth of all Buddhas. Those rays of light illumined the whole world, then descended on my body and entered into every pore of my body, beginning with my head. As soon as those light rays of the Bodhisattva, with various names, emanating magical projections of the various miracles attending the birth of a Bodhisattva, had entered me, they caused the spheres of light at the front of the Bodhisattva's light rays to be manifest in my body, and the supernal manifestations of miracles attending the birth of all Bodhisattvas were visible.<sup>712</sup>

我於淨飯王宮。菩薩將欲下生之時。見菩薩身一一毛孔咸放光明。名一切如來受生功德輪。一一毛孔皆現不可說不可說佛刹微塵數菩薩受生莊嚴。彼諸光明。皆悉普照一切世界。照世界已。來入我頂乃至一切諸毛孔中。

Emperor Zhongzong was reluctant when reinstalled as emperor towards the deposition of his mother Wu Zetian,<sup>713</sup> and even when the political upheavals had passed, he seemed

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<sup>712</sup> Translation modified after Thomas Cleary 1993, 1436.

<sup>713</sup> For a brief recount of the coup that deposed Wu Zetian, see Richard W. L. Guisso 1979, 319-321. Empress Wu had been in poor health for a while, and passed away shortly after the heavy blow of abdication. Emperor

determined to fulfill the role of a filial son.<sup>714</sup> Indeed, in contrast to the Confucian charges of unfiliality, the Buddha also played the role of a dutiful son through his visit to Queen Māyā.<sup>715</sup>

#### FROM CAVES TO PALACES: THE CHINESE TRANSFORMATION OF BUDDHIST SPACE

When writing about the spatial transformation of early Japanese architecture, Mitsuo Inoue drew our attention to the gradual “flattening” of the plan. In other words, the main building of an architectural compound was made increasingly wide and shallow. As Mitsuo has noted, while the Golden Hall of Hōryūji was 1.3 times wider than it was deep, the ratio of width to depth gradually increased, reaching 1.96 to 1 at the Golden Hall of Tōshōdaiji.<sup>716</sup> A similar trend is observed through the development of Buddhist space in China. However, while Mitsuo Inoue has suggested the increasing interest on a structure’s façade as the main reason underlying the gradual flattening of plans, I argue that this transformation of Buddhist space was more closely associated with the shift away from

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Zhongzong’s daughter, Princess Anle 安樂公主 (d. 710 CE), was married to Wu Chongxun 武崇訓 (683-707 CE), the son of Wu Sansi 武三思 (649-707 CE), who was the nephew of the late Empress Wu. The marriage undoubtedly maintained the connection between the two families. After both Wu Chongxun and Wu Sansi were killed in a coup in Shenlong 3 (707 CE), Princess Anle went on to marry another man of the Wu family, Wu Yanxiu 武延秀 (d. 710 CE), who was her late husband’s cousin (Ibid., 321-324). However, despite Emperor Zhongzong’s doting on Princess Anle, her recently surfaced memorial stele confirmed a long-held suspicion that she poisoned her father to death (Meng Xianshi 2008). The tragedy ended with Li Longji 李隆基, who later became Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗, killing Princess Anle, Wu Yanxiu and Empress Wei 韋后 (d. 710 CE), and reinstalling his father Emperor Ruizong to the throne.

<sup>714</sup> As acts of filial piety, Emperor Zhongzong renamed the Midstream Resurgence Monastery of the Great Tang 大唐中興寺 at Luoyang to Monastery of Saintly and Good [Mother] 聖善寺. In pursuing the posthumous welfare for his deceased mother in Shenlong 神龍 2 (706 CE), he also built the Pavilion of Gratitude for Maternal Benevolence 報慈閣 in her memory. See Antonino Forte 1992, 233.

<sup>715</sup> Kenneth K. S. Ch’en 1973, 34-35.

<sup>716</sup> Mitsuo Inoue 1985, 60-66.

adopting foreign cave shrines to increasingly embracing the indigenous timber structures.

Early architecture that was specially made for Buddhist icons and rituals often adopted plans that were close to being symmetrical about four axes. Buddhist pagodas and caves, for example, mostly featured a similar kind of square-planed religious space with one side reserved for entrance and three other sides adorned with three groups of Buddhist icons, often referred to as the “Three Icons on Three Sides (三面三鋪)” by Chinese scholars.<sup>717</sup> Alternatively, there was the so-called “Central Pagoda-Pillar (中心塔柱)” arrangement with a solid core featuring Buddhist icons on four sides, surrounded by a continuous aisle as a circumambulating path for worshipers.<sup>718</sup> The coming of the early Tang then saw a development in cave shrines that featured a detached central altar and increasingly elaborate statues of Buddhist assembly sculpted in the round. Centrally placed altars emerged around the same time to accommodate this change, however, the overall spatial arrangement remained square-shaped.

The mid-eighth century Nanchansi Main Hall introduced above was not essentially different in its spatial arrangement compared to this kind of cave shrine, exemplified by Mogao Cave 205 built in the early Tang period. (Figure 44) Mogao Cave 205 had a main

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<sup>717</sup> The so-called “Three Icons on Three Sides” model is exemplified by the Central Grotto of Xiaonanhai and the Dazhusheng Cave of Baoshan discussed in a previous section of this chapter, “Integrating the Avatamsaka Trinity and the Cosmic Triad”. Some early pagodas built with an accessible sanctuary inside adopted the same iconographic arrangement, such as the Xiudingsi Pagoda 修定寺塔 located near Mount Bao in Anyang 安陽, Henan province. For more on the Xiudingsi Pagoda, see Li Yuqun 2012, vol.5, 176-194.

<sup>718</sup> It was seen used by both caves and pagodas, such as Caves 1 and 2 at the Yungang Grotto, and the Four Gates Pagoda 四門塔 located in Licheng 歷城, Shandong province. All the above examples are pre-Tang structures. For the Four Gates Pagoda, see Nancy S. Steinhardt 2014, 209-213.

chamber with a trapezoid plan and a front chamber. While the timber structure at Nanchansi has a near square-shaped plan, interestingly enough, its masonry platform also took the shape of a trapezoid, divided into a front and rear section by their subtle difference in elevation. The main chamber of the cave is 6 m wide in front, 6.8 m wide at the back, and 6.75 m deep on both sides.<sup>719</sup> The rear section of the platform of the hall, which is about 15.64 m wide and 14.31 m deep,<sup>720</sup> was more than twice as large in dimensions. However, their interior spatial arrangement remained fundamentally similar. Both interior space centered around a U-shaped central altar, housing a central Buddha in frontal position with attending Bodhisattvas and Heavenly Kings facing towards the central axis. The cave shrine sheltered its image altar with a frustum-shaped ceiling, mirroring the space created by the exposed ceiling of the timber hall. In many regards, the interior space of Nanchansi Main Hall was “cave-like”.

On the other hand, I have mentioned the practice of using official bureaus as well as converting palaces and royal residences into Buddhist temples. At Maijishan, for example, we get a rare glimpse into how a network of columns would support such a timber hall, and how they would be divided into units of bays to accommodate Buddhist icons. Cave 4, completed in the mid-sixth century under the Northern Zhou, used an exceptional 7-bay façade, which was believed to be a representation of high status palatial architecture. (Figure 45) From the outside, it seems that the grotto space would be transformed into a

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<sup>719</sup> Measurements based on Shih Chang-ju 1996, vol. 2, 179.

<sup>720</sup> The timber frame of the Main Hall is 11.75 m wide and 10 m deep as measured between the central points of its corner columns. Measurements based on Qi Yingtao and Chai Zejun 1980, 61-75.

wide and shallow shape following its architectural frame, however, its interior space was in fact divided into separate niches at each bay, which probably corresponded to a row of individual canopies used in actual timber halls to house icons. Inside each niche, a traditional formula was used, with central Buddhas each flanked by two monks and six Bodhisattvas. The late-seventh century rebuilt Golden Hall of Hōryūji is comparable to Maijishan Cave 4 in its spatial arrangement, where architecture was simply a container for the icons, and where these two elements were yet to further engage and integrate. (Figure 46) Although the Golden Hall features a rectangular-shaped altar and multiple icons placed side by side, its three principle Buddhas were more of a pastiche. They were separately cast; each covered by a separate canopy and placed on portable individually made wooden thrones. A total of thirteen statues date to different periods between the early seventh to early 13th century.<sup>721</sup>

The Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, however, was of a completely different kind. While retaining the essential element of a rock-cut altar in cave shrines, it arranged the icons in a novel design that fully took advantage of the wide and shallow space of Chinese timber halls. Since the interior of this 7-bay structure was used as a whole, it allowed a rectangular-shaped altar that measures 26.17 m wide and 6.55 m deep, with a ratio of width

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<sup>721</sup> The central Śākyamuni with two attendants was commissioned in Suiko 推古 31 (623 CE), while the Bhaiṣajyaguru (i.e. the Medicine Buddha) to its left was probably from the mid- to late- seventh century, and the Amitābha to its right was made in Jōei 貞永 1 (1232 CE). Four wooden statues of the Four Heavenly Kings were placed on the four corners of the altar, dating to mid-seventh century, but it is not clear whether they were originally made for the Hōryūji Golden Hall or relocated there from another place. The pair of wooden statues of the Mahāsrī 吉祥天 and Vaiśravaṇa 毗沙門天 were commissioned for the Golden Hall in Jōryaku 承暦 2 (1078 CE) by the monastic community at Hōryūji. See Nagaoka Ryūsaku, et al. 2012.

to depth that is almost 4 to 1,<sup>722</sup> and the elongated space made possible the display of multiple Buddhist images side by side, in this case a group of thirty-some icons. Most extraordinarily, however, the statues were put in place as an integrated design. As I have discussed previously, the iconographic scheme of the Buddha Hall combined the “Avatamsaka Trinity” and the “Cosmic Triad” formulas with a total of five principle deities placed alongside each other in one single place. This may seem commonplace in the eyes of a modern viewer, but it must have been a remarkable development when examined in the historical context.

#### **STRUCTURAL AND DECORATIVE SCHEME OF THE TANG DYNASTY BUDDHA HALL**

By the early Tang, blueprints for utopian monasteries and representations of Buddhist paradises had already demonstrated heavy influence from the prevalent cosmopolitan monasticism and mirrored scenes of palatial architecture.<sup>723</sup> (Figure 47) In contrast to the early rock-cut cave temples, mountain monasteries like Foguangsi had involved to embrace urban buildings to provide their religious space. The timber frame of the Buddha Hall has been regarded as a standard example of the so-called “diantang-system (殿堂式)” used for official buildings of highest status,<sup>724</sup> characterized

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<sup>722</sup> Measurements based on field survey with the Tianjin University Team.

<sup>723</sup> Blueprints for utopian monasteries were exemplified by Daoxuan’s *Illustrated Scripture of the Jetavana Monastery in the Śrāvastī Kingdom in Central India* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經 (T45n1899). Examples of Buddhist paradises in murals can be found, for example, in Mogao Caves 148, 172, 217, 220, 335, and 338 at Dunhuang. See Tan Zhihui 2002; Ho Puay-peng 1992; Jennifer Noering McIntire 2000.

<sup>724</sup> To be distinguished from an alternative “tingtang-system (廳堂式)”. The terms “*diantang* (殿堂)” and “*tingtang* (廳堂)” were originally used in the *Building Standards* to designate a sense of hierarchy in timber structures. Close reading of the texts will reveal that the designing and construction approaches prescribed for



by architectural traits such as the adoption of columns of unified height.<sup>725</sup> Chen Mingda has suggested a convenient way to understand such timber frameworks as composed of three horizontal structural layers.<sup>726</sup> The lowest layer is the so-called “column network (柱網)”. Along the wall plane above the columns, layers of crosspieces were piled up to form the middle “bracket layer (鋪作)”, as a transition between the bottom layer of columns and the top layer of “roof truss (屋架)”. With the roof truss having undergone significant changes in the post-Tang period,<sup>727</sup> this section focuses on the first two parts in its discussion of the structural and decorative scheme of the Buddha Hall.

#### THE COLUMN NETWORK AND THE SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Buddha Hall of Foguangsì employs a total of 36 columns. A row of 8 eave columns, or “columns under the eave (下檐柱)” as known in the *Building Standards*, give the hall a 7-bay appearance on its west façade. The rest of columns were aliened in another 4 rows, making the hall 4-bay in depth. (Figure 48) Like other buildings of the diantang-system, stability of the timber frame is mainly achieved by “architraves (欄額)” that connect the structure at column tops. Through the connection by a series of

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these two types of buildings are indeed different. Nevertheless, it was not until very recently that the two are treated as distinct “systems” with their structural features clearly spelt out. Chen Mingda proposed three basic types for the Sui and Tang period and summarized the two different systems detailed in the *Building Standards* (Chen Mingda 1981). Fu Xi’nian had since furthered Chen’s arguments (Fu Xi’nian 1998a, 234-244).

<sup>725</sup> One exception is the “pent roofs (副階)”, whose columns are often shorter than the main structure. Nevertheless, they can be regarded as auxiliary elements instead of an indispensable part of the core structure.

<sup>726</sup> Chen Mingda 1981; id. 1990.

<sup>727</sup> See “Introduction”, where I laid out C-14 dating results that suggest the roof truss of the Buddha Hall was the most heavily renovated part, with most of the samples dating to 12th century CE or later.

architraves, the columns at the Buddha Hall form two rectangular, concentric structural “rings”, an “outer ring” and an “inner ring”. The architecture exhibits a more archaic method that uses “floor joists (地栿)”, or “column-foot joists (柱腳方)”, to connect the columns at the bottom. In its present condition, floor joists are employed between the 6 eave columns that formed the “central bay (當心間)”, “central-flanking bays (次間)” and “second-to-last bays (梢間)”. Additionally, between all the 8 eave columns and 6 columns in the second row to the west of the building, “secondary architraves (由額)” run below the main architraves. On the west façade, secondary architraves also serve as “door lintels (門額)”. Combined with jambs called the “upright cheeks (立頰)”, they formed the frames of the five front “plank doors (版門)” installed in the intercolumnal space. The space between the floor joists and the pavement tiles are then filled in with nonstructural plank pads. The doors are flanked by two “end bays (盡間)” furnished with “mullioned windows (櫺窗)” and low brick walls.

The kind of plank doors and mullioned windows employed at the Buddha Hall were made in line with an ancient tradition. The construction of the plank doors, for example, was recorded in texts and illustrations of the *Building Standards*, and continued to be popular until the Ming and Qing dynasties period. The *Building Standards* detailed the jointing of planks to make door panels, as well as specifics about the doors’ meticulous components. (Figure 49) The extant example at the Buddha Hall is exemplary. Each plank door is composed by two leaves, which are made from nine to eleven panels joined together. The hanging stile positioned next to the door jamb is called the “elbow panel (肘

版)”, made with protruding “pivots (鑕)” at top and bottom. These pivots were designed to insert into the sockets on a upper collar fixed on the door lintel called, literally, the “chicken-standing branch (雞栖木)”, as well as into the floor joists that serve as sill plate at the bottom. The front of each door leaf is decorated with five rows and nine lines of decorative “round nail-heads (浮漚)” and the backside fastened with five “cross rails (楯)”.

The ink inscriptions written on the back of the door panels and jambs deserve much attention. Among the decipherable writings, the earliest dates appeared to be Xiantong 7 (866 CE), written about a decade after the donor inscription found on the beams of the Buddha Hall. Together with other inscriptions that dated to the Tang, Five Dynasties and Jin period, previous scholars have rightfully concluded that the door panels should be the original ones put up during the construction activities during the Tang period. However, several major clues suggest that these front doors and windows were initially placed along the interior front columns, and eave columns were left exposed to form a columned open portico.<sup>728</sup> As a result, all 8 columns in the second row to the west of the building must have been secondary architraves and floor joists. (Figure 48)

The initial investigation of the Foguangsi undertaken by Liang Ssu-ch’eng and his colleagues did not make note of any traces of historical change of the architecture of the Buddha Hall. Consequently, they regarded the building as surviving in its original

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<sup>728</sup> As I explain below, some scholars in the field of Chinese architectural history are aware of this structural and spatial transformation at the Buddha Hall. Yet despite passing mentions, in-depth reports and discussions are needed to address this issue with due attention. In addition, although there is a consensus that this alternation is a very important one, questions such as when and why the change took place remain to be answered.

design.<sup>729</sup> Chen Mingda was probably the first to call attention to the later alternations of this structure in writing. In a review of the *A Brief History of Chinese Architecture* 中國建築簡史, he mentioned in passing that the Buddha Hall once had an open front portico,<sup>730</sup> and noted that it serves as an example in the border issue of extant buildings not necessarily resembling how they were when first constructed. Chen suggested that in introducing such sites, a reconstruction of its original design is in order. However, it seems that the review did not attract enough attention, and the subsequent revisions of *A Brief History of Chinese Architecture* never incorporated nor responded to Chen's critique.<sup>731</sup>

Eluding acknowledgement in the mainstream writings on the Foguangsi in the Chinese academia, the second reference to the historical portico at the Buddha Hall appeared in Japanese publications. A “Japanese Diplomatic Mission to China for Communication in Architectural Studies 日本古代建築友好訪華団” was received by the Architectural Society of China 中國建築學會 in August, 1975 CE. The Mission was able to visit the Foguangsi in addition to the Nanchansi and the Jinci 晉祠 through tours guided by Chai Zejun and Xu Wenda. In the same year, a state of the field article was published in

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<sup>729</sup> Liang Sicheng 1944, 24.

<sup>730</sup> Chen Mingda 1963, 28. Chen's observation was probably made during his field investigations of site in 1950s CE with his colleague Mo Zongjiang. The author would like to thank Prof. Zhang Shiqing at Dongnan University and Prof. Din Yao at Tianjin University for the above information.

<sup>731</sup> The *History of Traditional Chinese Architecture* 中國古代建築史, which directly born out from an effort to expand the *A Brief History of Chinese Architecture*, did not reflect the fact that the Buddha Hall went through a major structural change either (Liu Tun-chen ed. 2003; Guo Husheng 2003, 134-139). This was also the case for other major textbooks that have been published since, notably the *Chinese Architectural History* 中国建筑史 (Pan Guxi ed. 2009; Liu Xujie 2009, 155-157) and the five-volume *History of Traditional Chinese Architecture* 中國古代建築史 (Fu Xi'nian ed. 2001; Zhong Xiaoqing and Fu Xi'nian 2001, 495-499).

the *Journal of Architecture and Building Science* 建築雜誌, in which Sekiguchi Kin'ya included major new findings on Chinese historical buildings, remarking that the Foguangsi probably once had a front portico similar to that of the Golden Hall 金堂 at the Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺.<sup>732</sup>

Returning to the scholarly community in China, half a century after Chen's article, the issue of the Buddha Hall's initial design with a front portico was finally raised again by Chai Zejun. The evidence Chai discussed was essentially the same as that given by Sekiguchi.<sup>733</sup> This may not be a coincidence, since Chai led the tours for the visiting Japanese architectural historians. Both Chai and Sekiguchi took part in the joint investigation of the Foguangsi, and they may have some discussions during that period.<sup>734</sup> Prompted by Chai's cue, Lü Zhou and his team from the Architectural Design and Research Institute of Tsinghua University briefly presented this major historical structural change of the Buddha Hall in their recent report, however, they did not address the underlying circumstances nor the further implications surrounding this issue.<sup>735</sup>

What are the building archaeological evidence that helped previous scholars to detect the structural alternation regarding the front portico of the Foguangsi Buddha Hall? First, it is evident from the traces of mortise holes on the six central columns in the second

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<sup>732</sup> Sekiguchi Kin'ya 1975, 55-56.

<sup>733</sup> Evidence observed by both scholars is discussed in detail below. See Sekiguchi Kin'ya 1975, 55-56; Chai Zejun 2011, 4.

<sup>734</sup> However, it is not clear whether Sekiguchi was informed by Chai during the trip or the other way around.

<sup>735</sup> Chai Zejun has written as the preface to this most recent monograph on the Buddha Hall, where he pointed out that the initial drafts filed by Lü Zhou's team failed to report this problem (Chai Zejun 2011, 3-5; cf. Lü Zhou 2011). Zhang Shiqing also mentioned in the Baoguosi report, which will be discussed later.

row to the front (west) of the hall. These mortise holes appear in pairs, located right beneath the architraves on column tops and just above ground level at the bottoms, now backfilled with wood blocks and coated with paint. These mortise holes would be used to hold the tenon tongues of secondary architraves (door lintels) and floor joists.

Secondly, at the two end bays along the second row of columns, although “intrabacket-infills (栱眼壁)” were missing, the bottom sides of the first crosspiece, where upper reams of such infills would be adjoined, are left with unpainted central bands. Two lines of white plaster divided the painted and exposed parts, which must have been left from coating the infills. Both traces suggest that infills originally existed at these two bays. Consequently, there would have needed to be some kind of structure installed beneath the infills to offer structural support.

Thirdly, the missing intrabacket-infills also revealed the formations of the column-top “cap blocks (櫨料)”. In contrast to cap blocks that usually have a smooth, inward curved bottom called “block concave (料欹)”, these cap-blocks left their middle bottom sections unprocessed, leaving an uncarved, protruding part. Such a configuration could only be explained if infills were installed. Together with the protruding section, they would have been coated by plaster to form a continuous surface for the intrabacket-set mural panels.

Finally, the arrangement of column pedestals offers the most important evidence. All eave columns, whether their foot partially concealed in walls or covered by the floor joists, adopted the kind of lotus-petal decorated stone pedestals whose high-relief rises

about 7.5-9.0 cm above ground, clearly distinguishable from columns in other places of the structure. It is clear that these pedestals were decorated because they were originally placed in an exposed space.<sup>736</sup> Otherwise, the fully carved pedestals would not only cause unnecessary waste of labor, they would also effectually prevent the floor joists from fully joining with the columns.<sup>737</sup>

In the epilogue, I return to the subject of Foguangsi Buddha Hall's change in spatial arrangement to provide more historical background and explore the underlying significance for these alternations. For now, it suffices to conclude that based on evidence drawn from building archaeology in the analyses above, it can be said with some certainty that current front interior aisle was converted from a former portico, which was a columned open space, originally designed as the front façade of the Foguangsi Buddha Hall (Figure 50). Doors and windows were then installed between the second row of columns, presumably with similar structural frames provided by architraves, secondary architraves (door lintels) and floor joists (Figure 48).<sup>738</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> It is a standard practice seen in many other cases, and similar to the way the above-mentioned cap-blocks had uncarved parts.

<sup>737</sup> Under the current spatial arrangement of the Buddha Hall, the floor joists are shortened in height, and the gap left between them the floor pavement were filled up by non-structural plank pads, which were awkwardly shaped to appear to be clinging to the pedestals by wrapping around the column bases. Originally, however, when the doors and windows were located between the second row of columns, all the 8 eave columns and their pedestals would have been completely exposed, showing off their decorations. This reconstruction could also explain the mortise holes left on the second row of columns that are placed on plain square pedestals embedded in the floor. The mortise holes extend to 5.4 cm high above the ground, which is exactly equal to the combined height of the floor joists (3.7 cm) and the pad planks (1.7 cm), allowing both members to be joint with the body of the column.

<sup>738</sup> Nevertheless, as I explained in the previous note, the plank pads would be connected to the columns with mortise-and-tenon joints in the original design, instead of stacked beneath the floor joists observed in the current condition.

What is more extraordinary, however, is that this original ground plan of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi with its open front portico is an exact embodiment of the “*jinxiang doudi cao* (金箱斗底槽)”, sometimes translated as the “concentric layouts”, a term introduced in the *Building Standards*. According to this Northern Song text, the columns of buildings built with the “diantang-system (殿堂式)” should be arranged to conform to conventional grid patterns, or a number of major layout types. These were the *cao*-layouts, each with a specific name and arrangement (Figure 88).<sup>739</sup> For “concentric layouts”, the explanatory text next its diagram reads:

[This diagram shows] the layout for a hall or a pavilion with a seven-bay core structure, with pent roofs that wrap around [the core on its four sides], each two-rafter in width; the core structure is of the concentric layout.

殿閣地盤殿身七間。副階周匝各兩架椽。身內金箱斗底槽。<sup>740</sup>

With a 7-bay core structure, the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi serves as an outstanding example of this kind of concentric layout: when the auxiliary “pent roofs (副階)” are eliminated from the model diagram, what left would be a 7-by-4-bay hall fashioned with two rings of columns that closely resembling the structural formation of the Buddha Hall.

Although previous scholars often take core space of concentric layouts as 回-shaped and symmetrical, I explain in detail in Appendix B that the concentric layout was in fact designed to have an open front portico in front with enclosed interior aisles on both

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<sup>739</sup> For the current discussion, it suffices to explain the *cao*-layout as a kind of grid pattern or ground layout. However, its exact explication has been very controversial. I offer an overview of previous scholarship and my own arguments in the section “The Structural Layout” of Appendix B.

<sup>740</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f31, 2a.



sides and the rear. This asymmetry is also evident in the diagram. (Figure 88) The reconstructed design of Foguangsi Buddha Hall serves to reinforce a deeper understanding of the construction system introduced by the *Building Standards*, and the significance of related archetypes of building layouts. Since the Foguangsi was very likely sponsored by the Tang court, the similarities between its layout and a model plan given in the Northern Song officially sanctioned architectural manual may not be coincidental after all. It demonstrates the continuity in imperial building traditions to a certain degree. To further illustrate this point, it is instrumental to examine another parallel in plans of individual buildings observed in the palatial complex of the Tang dynasty.

At the Hanyuan Hall 含元殿 of the Daming Palace 大明宮, traces of column bases left on the pounded earth platform inform us that the main hall was a 13-by-6 bay structure, measuring 67.03 m in width and 28.22 m in depth (Figure 51). By piecing together archaeological and textual evidence, scholars have suggested a reconstruction with a 11-by-4 bay core space, surrounded by a one-bay wide pent-roof on four sides.<sup>741</sup> The core structure of the Hanyuan Hall was further divided into a central 9-bay wide assembly room that is open towards the front,<sup>742</sup> flanked by two side chambers at the two end bays.<sup>743</sup> A

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<sup>741</sup> Fu Xi'nian 1973, 30-48; id. 1998b, 76-87; Yang Hongxun 2001, 409-440. Fu and Yang's reconstructions were similar in the basic layout of the Hanyuan Hall, except that Fu reserved two rear passages through the north doors directly into the assembly room. The existence of pent-roofs was based on the biography of Li Xun 李訓 (d. 835 CE), which recorded a court ceremony in which Tang officials "ascended the Hanyuan Hall through its east stairway, with ministers and courtiers holding their positions separately under the pent-roof (副階)". See *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f169, 4a.

<sup>742</sup> Yang Hongxiong suggested that the convention of "tang" assembly room requires an open front. The Hanyuan Hall, nonetheless, could have opted for screen doors or other kinds of lightweight furnishing for its front façade.

“*fusi* (罽罽, var. 罽罽)” screen was installed behind the royal seat, probably extending throughout the entire width of the 9 central bays, and dividing the space into an open front hall and a private rear chamber.<sup>744</sup>

The layout of the main hall in the Tang imperial palace demonstrates certain consistency with the ideal residential plans in sources from early China. Writing in the 1930s CE, Liu Tun-chen already took note of a perceived ideal model for residential structures of officials. Its basic format was recurrent in various ancient sources, and described with a rare degree of consistency.<sup>745</sup> This archetype features “*tang* (堂)”, or open-front, audience rooms, a private sleeping chamber placed towards the back, and other “*shi* (室)”, “*jia* (夾)” and “*fang* (房)” chambers at both sides and the rear.<sup>746</sup> This “front hall

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<sup>743</sup> We are also informed that in the core structure, there were side chambers in addition to an assembly room, for during the coronation of Empress Dowager Shen 沈, Emperor Dezong was recorded “wearing imperial regalia, stepping out [of the Hanyuan Hall] from the door to the east side chambers (東序)”. See *Old Book of Tang* (S46), f52, 8b.

<sup>744</sup> During the “Sweet Dew Incident (甘露之禍)” of the Taihe era, the *Records of Emperor Wenzong* 文宗實錄 documented that the emperor was forced to break the screens and exit the Hanyuan Hall through its north door. The *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* 資治通鑑 (S47), f245, 19b, contains a similar description. Based on the plan of the Daming Palace, we can further reconstruct the regular route the emperor used to ascend the Hanyuan Hall. He would travel from the Zichen Hall 紫宸殿 at the inner court, passing the Xuanzheng Hall 宣政殿 of the middle court. Reaching the outer court, he would enter through its north door, into the private rear chamber of the Hanyuan Hall first. He would then pass through the east side chamber and make his formal appearance into the central assembly room. This reconstruction agrees with textual descriptions of imperial activities at the Hanyuan Hall, as well as the plan of the structure retrieved through archaeological excavations.

<sup>745</sup> Especially when compared to the much-disputed “orthodox layout” of the Luminous Hall 明堂, see Liu Tun-chen 1932, 129-172.

<sup>746</sup> Perhaps not a mere coincidence, this ideal layout for residential structures much agrees with Yang Hongxun’s reconstructions of main halls in palatial complexes. At site F901 of Dadiwang 大地灣, Qi’an 秦安, Gansu province, Yang identified the central room in the building as an assembly hall surrounding a hearth, corresponding to the *tang*-room with its implied ceremonial functions. The side and rear chambers were believed to be the *pang* and *shi*, with *jia*-chambers located at the two rear corners, all belonging to the private sector. Yang has proposed this site as the earliest known example of the “Joint Palace of the Yellow Emperor (黃帝合宮)” layout, and served as precedents for the “Grand Hall of the Xiahou (a.k.a. Xia) Clan

and rear chamber (前堂後室)” plan with side and back rooms may have indeed gave birth to the so-called “front assembly [hall] and rear sleeping [chamber] (前朝後寢)” structures in palatial architecture. Above all, the Hanyuan Hall also resembles the “concentric layout” in the *Building Standards* and the original design of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi. Even the screens installed behind the imperial seat would be analogues to the partition walls behind the Buddhist altar, referred to as “receiving walls (來迎壁)” in Japanese sources.<sup>747</sup>

Regarding the choice of a front portico, Zhang Shiqing maintained that front porticos must have been a common feature for buildings during the Tang and Song period when writing about the Main Hall at the Baoguo Temple 保國寺, located in Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang province, which also had a front portico that was later converted into an enclosed space in renovations.<sup>748</sup> Indeed, based on images of architecture preserved in tomb murals and grotto sites, buildings were frequently shown with colonnaded façades and curtains hanging between the columns, regardless of their function as Buddhist halls or palatial

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(夏後氏世室)” described in the “Records of Examination of Craftsman 考工記” of *Rites of Zhou* 周禮. It should be noted that there was a long history of obsession with “Grand Hall of the Xiahou Clan” based on the *Rites of Zhou* and the Mingtang tradition of the Xia, Shang and Zhou period, with different interpretations already in debate during the Han dynasty (see Chiang Chien-I 1993, 99-115; Shen Yuzhi 1995, 381-390; Chiou Chieng-Chi 2005, 43-49). Yang Hongxun had also applied this layout format in his reconstructions of other excavated palatial structures, including the early Shang dynasty palace no. 1 of Erlitou 二里頭, at Yanshi 偃師, Henan province, the Shang period palace F2 of Panlongcheng 盤龍城, at Huangpo 黃坡, Hubei province, and the Western Zhou period palace F5 of Zhaochen 召陳, at Fufeng 扶風, Shaanxi province (Yang Hongxun 2001). Nevertheless, compared with the case of Dadiwang site F901, most of these reconstructions were based on speculation rather than concrete archaeological evidence.

<sup>747</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng tentatively named the structure as “screen walls (屏風牆)”. The usage of “receiving walls (來迎壁)” in Japanese is found in the description of a similar installment at the Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji.

<sup>748</sup> Zhang Shiqing et al. 2012, 85.

structures (Figure 52).<sup>749</sup> Similar can be said about contemporary Japan, where many early palatial and Buddhist buildings adopted front porticos. Tōshōdaiji, for example, was founded in Tenpyōhōji 天平宝字3 (759 CE) by Chinese monk Jianzhen 鑑真 (688-763 CE) born in Yangzhou 揚州. The architecture of its Golden Hall 金堂, completed in the late eighth century CE, unmistakably reflected the Tang architectural tradition that Jianzhen transmitted to Japan (Figure 54).

In discussing the Golden Hall of Tōshōdaiji in comparison to the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, Liang Ssu-ch'eng already took note of their resemblances, commenting that albeit the century that separated their dates of construction and their difference in size, the two halls are almost identical structurally, adopting a seven-bay wide and four-bay deep plan formed by two rings of columns.<sup>750</sup> Without the knowledge of Buddha Hall's change in design, he went on to comment that the Golden Hall's open portico differed from the Buddha Hall.<sup>751</sup> Nonetheless, Liang's remarks about the front portico of the Golden Hall

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<sup>749</sup> Unlike the side and back aisles, the implementation of front porticos appears to be unrelated to the size and scale of the structure. In Shanxi province, a number of modest three-by-three bay halls from the later Song and Jin periods still maintained the open façade design. Including, for example, the now destroyed Yuhuangong 雨花宮 at Yuci 榆次, the Dongyuemiao 東嶽廟 at Jincheng 晉城, the Yuhuangmiao 玉皇廟 and a couple of other buildings at Gaoping 高平. In the south, Song and Five Dynasties dynasty structures including the Main Hall of the Flower Grove Monastery 華林寺, at Fuzhou 福州, and the Three Purities Hall 三清殿 of the Temple of Primordial Sublimity 元妙觀, at Putian 莆田, both in Fujian province, in addition to the above-mentioned Main Hall of Baoguoqi, were all three-by-three bay buildings that once had a front portico. According to Zhang Shiqing, the Main Hall of Baoshengsi 保聖寺 at Juezhi 角直, and the Yanfusi 延福寺 may also once had open façades.

<sup>750</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1963a, 38. Other similarities Liang noted were the form of their roofs in a single-storied, gable style, the use of crescent-shaped beams and checkerboard ceiling design

<sup>751</sup> Liang attributed this difference to the spatial arrangement in the interior of the two halls, stating that at the Golden Hall houses a much smaller altar and group of sculptures, and therefore its interior space does not appear to be too cramped (Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1963a, 32-58).

may still apply to the Buddha Hall, had he known that the latter adopted a similar design. One of the significant visual effect of the front portico, Liang argued, was the strip of shaded it would cast with an open space on the front, creating a beautiful light-and-shadow effect on the exterior of the building façade.

Before Liang Ssu-ch'eng made note of the light and shade of the Golden Hall's portico, Aizu Yaichi had already celebrated a similar sensation in a poem entitled "The Round Columns of Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺の円柱", composed when stepping over the shade projected on the ground by the row of eave columns lit by the moon:

Stepping on the ground	おほてらの
Over the moon's shadow	まろきはしらの
Reflecting the round columns	つきかげを
Of the great temple,	つちにふみつつ
Absorbed in thoughts. <sup>752</sup>	ものをこそおもへ <sup>753</sup>

While Aizu captured the visual effect of front porticos with the sensitivity of a poet, he also lamented that art scholars at that time, "as if by common assent, tend to offer elaborate explanations on such things as the height of the column, its diameter, its proportion, or whether it is thicker in the lower middle part or not [...]".<sup>754</sup> Indeed, although the adoption of front porticos in architecture may involve factors from practical concerns (including shading from sun or sheltering from rain) to liturgical requirements (such as the need for distinguishing the sacred and the profane), as Mark Wilson Jones has nicely put it,

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<sup>752</sup> Translation after Kambayashi Tsunemichi 2001, 142.

<sup>753</sup> Aizu Yaichi 1988, 51.

<sup>754</sup> Kambayashi Tsunemichi 2001, 142-143; see Aizu Yaichi 1969, 164-169, for the full explanatory notes on the poem.

buildings are more importantly vehicles for imagery and aesthetic pleasure, and “the character and quality of spatial effects and visible surfaces are for most observers more significant than issues of construction or lineage.”<sup>755</sup>

The ancients were equally capable of observing the “row of columns on the façade [...] created deep shadows behind it”, and their sentiments may not be essentially different from the technical languages used by modern architectural historians that “they provided contrast and a sense of depth.”<sup>756</sup> Images including the “shadow of eaves (檐影)”, “sunlight under eaves (檐日)” were common poetic expressions during Tang period.<sup>757</sup> Writing over a thousand years earlier, Xu Hun 許渾 (fl. mid-9th c. CE) had penned verses that mirrored Aizu’s:

[...] Eave columns framed the moon’s decline	檐楹銜落月，
And hanging curtains reflected the light of a dying lamp.	幃幌映殘燈。
[...] Then the heart is at rest and thus free of obstructions	心閑即無事，
How different it is from that of a mountain-residing monk?	何異住山僧。 <sup>758</sup>

The “curtains (幃, 幌, 幕, 簾, etc.)” mentioned by the poet were a standard visual trope that coupled with colonnaded façades in contemporary paintings and murals. In addition to its decorative effects and visual potency, textual records informed us that the employment of

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<sup>755</sup> Mark Wilson Jones 2014, 6.

<sup>756</sup> Mitsuo Inoue 1985, 62.

<sup>757</sup> Besides its architectural significance and ritual implications, the front portico must have its aesthetic values as well. In Tang period poems and essays, “on portico (檐前, or 檐下)”, the “south portico (南檐)” in particular, was frequently mentioned as where people bathed in sunshine, appreciated scenery, enjoyed meals, took naps, practiced meditation or entertained friends.

<sup>758</sup> “Two Morning Poems 晨起兩首”, *Imperial Collection of Tang Dynasty Poems* 御定全唐詩 (S190), f528, 3a-3b.

the curtains had made the portico a space with flexible degrees of privacy, lighting, breathability, warmth and coolness.<sup>759</sup>

Based on the above analyses, it is clear that the formation, popularity and decline of the front portico, therefore, concerns artistic, religious, social and technical aspects that intermesh inextricably. Soon after the Tang dynasty, with the fading popularity of front porticos, the use of curtains as furnishing went through certain transformations as well. Notably, starting from the Song period, they were increasingly seen with the use of “lattice screens (格, var. 隔)” on building exteriors. (Figure 53) Formally serving as interior partitions, this relatively innovative use of lattice screens probably emerged during the Southern Song.<sup>760</sup> In the *Building Standards*, the method of making and installing “curtain rods (擗簾竿)” was recorded in its “Small Carpentry” section, and it seems that from that time, the positioning of curtains were pushed outwards, hanging directly below the bracket-sets or under the eaves. Nevertheless, maintaining curtains must have remained as an important role in monastic lives as well, since both the *Rules of Purity for the Chan Monastery* 禪院清規 and *Baizhang’s Regulations of Purity Revised on Imperial Order* 敕修百丈清規 had guidelines about switching the “warm curtain (暖簾)” and the “cool curtain (涼簾)” during change of seasons.<sup>761</sup> Their distinctive visual effects lingered on. As a result, visiting monks from Japan felt the need to include detailed drawings of the

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<sup>759</sup> Chen Shiyu 2014, 108-121.

<sup>760</sup> Fu Xi’nian 1983, 76-86; Yang Zhishui 2004, 308-316; Song Zhiyi and Liusu 2010, 50-52; and Chen Shiyu 2014, 108-121.

<sup>761</sup> Yifa 2002, xix-xxiii, 3-98.

curtains he observed at the Jinshansi 徑山寺 and Tiantongsi 天童寺 in the *Paintings of Five Great Buddhist Temples and Ten Secondary Ones* 五山十刹圖.<sup>762</sup>

#### THE BRACKET LAYER AND ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIONS

Liang Ssu-ch'eng once commented on the Chinese formation of bracket-set, claiming that it plays “the leading role” in the Chinese structural system, “a role so important that no study of Chinese architecture is feasible without a thorough understanding of this element.”<sup>763</sup> Wilma Fairbank, as the editor for Liang's *A Pictorial History*, devotes much attention in order to explaining this “exotic element”, pointing out that in the West, people are more accustomed to simple capitals that receive a direct weight and transfer it to the column, while in contrast, the Chinese use “a very complex number”.<sup>764</sup> Liang and Fairbank both emphasized the bracket-sets as a system of interlocking wooden supports, with jutting arms set into blocks, and these arms in turn bear other blocks that carry still longer arms, supporting the upper members of the frame in a delicate balance. Although Liang Ssu-ch'eng had already devoted an entire section on describing and analyzing the bracketing of the Buddha Hall in his initial report on Foguangsi, the complexity of the subject calls for more detailed treatment.

For the front façade of the Buddha Hall, column-top bracketing starts from cap blocks that rest directly on columns. (Figure 55) As mentioned previously, the cap blocks

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<sup>762</sup> Zhang Shiqing 2000.

<sup>763</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 2005, 14-22.

<sup>764</sup> Wilma Fairbank 2005, 11-13.



do not have a fully carved “block concave (料欹)” at the bottom. Instead, a middle section was left protruding along the wall plane. With the exception of the corner bracketing, all the cap blocks have “cruciform openings (十字開口)” that support members along the wall plane as well as protruding out. Along the wall plane, the cap blocks hold two sets of bracket-arms of the “two-tier brackets formation (重栱造)”, with the shorter bottom arms called “melon arms (瓜子栱)” and the longer top arms called “vine arms (蔓栱, a.k.a. 慢栱)”. The first melon arm is fully carved, and since it rests directly on the cap block, it also has been described as the “melon arm on the plaster channel (泥道瓜子栱)”.

The other three bracket-arms are carved as “shadow brackets (影栱)” on the first through third layers of crosspieces. The fourth crosspiece remained plain, serving as an exposed “rafter supporting joist (承椽方)”. All the shadow brackets use decorative molding on their upper bracket-arm edges, called the “bracket eye (栱眼)”. Cob infills that were mixed with clay and straw are used between the crosspieces and coated with plaster. Bearing blocks called “end blocks (散料)” or “small blocks (小料)” are used at the ends of these bracket-arms as cushioning between the crosspieces. They are also accurately named the “blocks alongside the crosspieces (順桁料)”.

Perpendicular to the wall plane, two layers or “jumps (跳)” of bracket-arms, called “jumping heads (跳頭)”, extend from the openings of the cap blocks. They are also known as “flowery arms (華栱)”, “branch arms (杪栱)”, or “rounded heads (卷頭)” due to their half-bull nose shaped edges. Processed with the technique of “rounding and beveling (卷殺)”, jutting bracket-arms are often beveled into four or three “petals (瓣)” to achieve an

overall rounded contour. At the Foguangsi, the rounded heads were smoothed out into an unbroken arc, with the petal forms then being very hard to notice. As described in the *Building Standards*, both jutting arms are made with 1 *zucai* (足材) sized timber, corresponding to 1 *cai* plus 1 *qi*.<sup>765</sup> It also aligns with the description “carving out the center block and bracket eye [in bias-relief] (隱出心料及棋眼)”.<sup>766</sup> The third and fourth jumps are lever arms with sloping miter edges, called “split bamboo lever arms (批竹昂)”, supported by the second jumping arm with an additional wood wedge with a beveled splice joint.

Additionally, cross-arms used transversely on the top of the protruding members add even more layers of complexity to the combination. The first jump of bracket-arms used the “stolen heart” construction (偷心造), while the second used the “filled heart” construction (計心造). In other words, there is no cross-arm resting on the end of the first jutting arm, while the second jutting arm holds both further protruding members, as well as members placed parallel to the wall plane, in this case, a set of two-tier brackets. The long upper vine arm supports the “arhat joist (羅漢方)”. Additionally, the fourth jump lever arm also uses the filled heart construction, topped by a cross-arm called the “single bracket (令棋, var. 單棋)”, and a protruding decorative piece called the “mocking head (耍頭)”. The shape of the mocking head resembles the half-bull nose shaped ends of bracket-arms, with the part extending inward shaped as a wedge that overlaps on top of the fourth jump of the

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<sup>765</sup> For the *cai*-modular used in the *Building Standards*, see section “The Modular System” of Appendix B.

<sup>766</sup> As prescribed for *zucai*-sized bracket-arms, compared to the jutting arms used for intercolumnar bracketing.

lever arm, just like a beveled splice joint. The single bracket, with a thin and flat strip called a “cushion bracket (替木)” or a “receptacle [of purlin] (枘, var. 複棟)”, supports the “eave-lifting purlin (撩檐枋)” under the overhanging eave.

Altogether, the intercolumnar bracketing on the front façade of the Buddha Hall uses two jumps of jutting bracket-arms, or two jumps less than would be used in column-top bracketing. (Figure 56) There are no cap-blocks, and the first jutting arms extend out directly from the first layer of crosspieces. Along the wall plane, one set of two-tier shadow brackets were carved on the first and second layers of crosspieces. A single shadow bracket was carved on the third layer of crosspieces, and the fourth layer remained plain as the rafter-supporting joist. When examined with the adjacent column-top, their arrangement of shadow brackets seems to be mutually complementary. They alternate their long and short arms; for example, the column-top bracketing carved the longer vine arm on the first crosspiece, which was accompanied by the shorter melon arm of the intercolumnar bracketing.

Perpendicular to the wall plane, both of the bracket-arms are made with 1 *cai* sized timber, same with the crosspieces that are stacked up to form the “well-ring” structure. Consequently, instead of carving the outlines of center blocks, at the intersection between shadow brackets and protruding ones, three centrally aligned blocks known as the “center blocks (齊心枋, var. 心枋)” were used between the four layers of crosspieces. The first two have cruciform openings, while the third only has openings on the sides (順身開口). Plastered cob infills are used between the crosspieces, as well as between the two jutting

arms and the mocking head. The first jutting arms have a “filled heart” construction that branches out an irregular-shaped cross-arm with a scalloped rim. The second jutting arm supports a single bracket, which in turn supports the arhat joist under the overhanging eave. A joist extends out from the third layer of crosspieces and intersects with the single bracket, protruding as a mocking head with a sloping miter edge. Between the column-top crosspiece, the arhat joist and the eave lifting purlin, battens were installed to support soffits called “rafter concealing boards (遮椽版)”.

The bracketing adopted on the front façade of the Buddha Hall has been proven to be extraordinary for several reasons. First, its remarkable conformity to the Northern Song treatise, the *Building Standards*, is immediately clear from the above descriptions and analyses. Most of the timber members can be identified with a corresponding component described in the text. In addition, for the majority of identified components, further structural and formalistic specifics prescribed by the text are consistently recognized in the actual structure. In this aspect, the Buddha Hall assumes a significant place in the long tradition of official, and even imperial architecture that was practiced by the courts of the Tang and Song dynasties. Secondly, the bracketing also has some traits quite different from the standards of the treatise and extant buildings from the post-Tang dynasty period, suggesting that despite some remarkable consistencies, the bracketing system had also changed substantially during the intervening period.

One such change is reflected in the arrangement of protruding timber members. After systematically introducing the individual components of the bracketing system, the

*Building Standards* included a section of “instruction on the general orders of bracketing (總鋪作次序之製)”, which recorded the ways these components should be put together.

Along the façade of the Buddha Hall, the protruding members of the column-top bracketing correspond with the text perfectly:

[Bracketing that] extends four jumps is called seven-*puzuo*. <Two “rounded heads” protrude at the bottom; two lever arms protrude at the top.>

出四跳謂之七鋪作。下出兩卷頭，上施兩昂。<sup>767</sup>

Later in the passage, “seven-*puzuo* with two branch arms and two lever arms (七鋪作兩杪兩昂)” appeared as shorthand for this standard combination. However, discrepancies between the text and the Buddha Hall are found in the arrangement of intercolumnar bracketing. The Buddha Hall’s intercolumnar bracketing does not have any lever arms, even though for two-jump bracketing, the *Building Standards* recommends:

[Bracketing that] extends two jumps is called five-*puzuo*. <One “rounded head” protrudes at the bottom; one lever arm protrudes at the top.>.

出兩跳謂之五鋪作。下出一卷頭，上施一昂。<sup>768</sup>

If the total number of jumps is already determined by the grade and scale of the building project,<sup>769</sup> what are the factors that influence the arrangement of rounded heads and lever

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<sup>767</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f4, 12a.

<sup>768</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f4, 11b.

<sup>769</sup> The most basic combination is a single bracket, sometimes referred to as a “three-blocks-on-one-arm (一料三栱)” bracket, which had been primarily used along the wall plane until the Northern Wei period. As Wang Lumin had convincingly demonstrated, this architectural element had its symbolic roots in the forms of the “mountain [山-shaped] scepter (山節)” and the “mulberry bow (桑弧)” loaded with arrow, both intrinsically associated with expressions of male power (Wang Lumin 1997, 24-30). As stated in the *Book of Rites* 禮記, the “mountain scepter shaped bracket”, or the three-blocks-on-one-arm combination, was architectural decoration that was reserved for the temples of the Son of Heaven, however, as later textual records revealed, it was soon appropriated by aristocrats and officials. Once the symbolic meaning of the single bracket had lost its relevance, it was incorporated into newer and fancier bracketing structures. During

arms for the protruding members?

It seems that ordering and shaping are more based on cultural and aesthetic concerns rather than structural or practical necessities.<sup>770</sup> It was not until the Northern Song and Jin period that the “one branch arm and one lever arm” combination started to appear in north China. This combination is sometimes used together with a mocking head that was also shaped into a lever arm end, visually achieving the more flamboyant effect of having two lever arms. The actual “two lever arms” combination, on the other hand, did not

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the Northern Dynasties, two-tier brackets started to emerge as the more prominent form, seen at the Guyang Cave 古阳洞 at Longmen Grotto dated to the Northern Wei, as well as the Stone Sarcophagus of Shi Jun 史君, dated to the Northern Zhou. At the beginning of the Tang dynasty, the single bracket was still the most commonly used in now extant architectural representations, frequently seen in tomb murals of Tang elites, and evident in depictions of architecture in Dunhuang murals. Judging from extant fragments of the “Decree on Constructions and Renovations 营缮令”, the court had attempted to exert restrictions on the use of two-tier brackets: “[Those who rank] below princes and dukes, [their] houses shall not use two-tier brackets or caisson ceilings. 王公已下舍屋不得施重栱藻井。” However, with progress in building technologies and loose enforcement, the decree was clearly not implemented for long. Reaching the middle Tang dynasty, double-tier brackets, along with single brackets, were no longer the symbol of official status or royal patronage. It seems that succeeding rulers had been compelled to come up with increasingly complicated bracketing to demonstrate its mastery of the most advanced building technology. With extending overhangs of eaves, the position of the iconic single bracket also projected further outwards with the help of jutting arms.

<sup>770</sup> The bracketing combination with two successive “rounded heads” bearing a single bracket, as used at intercolumnar positions on the façade of the Buddha Hall, were already seen on the rock-carved structure at Cave 1 of the Southern Xiangtangshan 响堂山 Grotto, built by the imperial house of the Northern Qi. Emerging towards the Northern Dynasties period, this combination must have represented the most complicated techniques of the time. It served as the column-top bracketing on the cave façade. The same structure remained as the most complex form among architectural images in early Tang Dunhuang murals, and it must have become immensely popular, as its representations were found in a number of paintings and models from the Tang period. Since this iconic combination was established prior to the advent of the “inclining lever arm (下昂)” as a bracketing element, its form remained unchanged even as more complicated bracketing combinations started to appear towards the middle of the Tang dynasty. It was still used during the Five Dynasties period in the South, for example at the Pagoda of Yunyansi 雲岩寺 on Tiger Hill 虎丘. In fact, many of the pre-Song dynasty two-jump bracketing systems did not use lever arms, either on column-tops or at intercolumnar positions. They continued to follow the Xiangtangshan prototype, which differed from the *Building Standards*’ rendering of this combination with “one branch arm and one lever arm”.

become widespread until the Jin period. It is also interesting to note that the increasing usage of lever arms is correlated with the forms of the lever arms. The *Building Standards* detailed two kinds of lever arms in addition to the standard ones. In addition to the “split bamboo lever arm (批竹昂)” with sloping miter edges, mentioned above, there is also the “zither topboard lever arm (琴面昂)”, which is only different in the forms of their decorative ends:

[To create] inclining lever arms: cut a bevel by sliding [the blade] from the outer edge for the block [on top of the lever arm] to the lowermost point, retaining a thickness of 2 *fèn* [at the tip]. [Make] the upper side of the lever arm a smooth concave curve, with the center [at the bottom of the curve] 2 *fèn* inward.

<Alternatively, add 1 *fèn* to [the thickness of] the concave, and smoothly bevel two edges to both sides [from the central ridge of the surface]. [This is] called the “zither topboard lever arm”. Or, cut a bevel by sliding [the blade] from the outer edge for the block [on top of the lever arm] to the tip [of the lever arm], and keep the upper side of the lever arm flat. [This is] called the “split bamboo lever arm”.>

下昂: [...] 自料外斜殺向下。留厚二分。昂面中顛二分。令顛勢圓和。亦有於昂面上隨顛加一分。訛殺至兩棱者，謂之琴面昂。亦有自料外斜殺至尖者，其昂面平直，謂之批竹昂。<sup>771</sup>

Of course, there are far more varieties in shaping the lever arms found in extant buildings.

Despite the fact that almost all Northern Song structures maintained the archaic “split bamboo” formula already used on the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi, half of the extant examples started experimenting with fashioning a central “ridge” on its upper side. This newly appeared form was not found in the *Building Standards*, but it was in effect achieved by transplanting the processing method of the “zither topboard” to the “split bamboo”,

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<sup>771</sup> Building Standards (S82), f4, 6a.

while sticking to a straight incline instead of using a concave curve. Interestingly, shortly after the compilation and circulation of the *Building Standards* in Chongning 崇寧 2 (1103 CE), towards the end of the Northern Song, the “zither topboard lever arm” recorded in the text came into fashion. From the Jurchen-Jin dynasty onward, most lever arms were fashioned with the “zither topboard” form.

Compared to the configuration of members protruding perpendicular to the wall plane, as well as the members placed transversely on top of them, which was under the heavy influence of aesthetic ideals of different times, the bracketing used atop the columns along the wall plane was a relatively unvarying marker of construction practices of a certain place. Two distinct structural systems were mentioned by the *Building Standards*, although they were not intentionally distinguished in the text. The first is referred to as “shadow brackets (影栱)” or “wall clinging brackets (扶壁栱)”:

When bracket-layers are used as bracketing along the wall plane atop columns, [these bracket-layers] are known as “shadow brackets” or “wall clinging brackets”. 凡鋪作當柱頭壁栱謂之影栱。又謂之扶壁栱。<sup>772</sup>

As mentioned above, “shadow brackets” were used at the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi. They are brackets that were carved in low relief on crosspieces. The carving process, “shaping up (隱出)”, was comparable to the masonry technique called “shaping reliefs by lowering the background plane (壓地隱起)”. Both processes feature low relief carving.<sup>773</sup>

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<sup>772</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f4, 13b.

<sup>773</sup> This carving method is distinguished from incisions (減地平綬) or high reliefs (剔地起突) in the text. See, *Building Standards* (S82), f3, 6b-7a, for example.



“Wall clinging”, on the other hand, emphasizes that the brackets are dependent on crosspiece stacks, instead of carved as individual members.

Despite the fact that “shadow brackets” were found to be adopted by extant buildings such as the Foguangsi, the *Building Standards* only introduced the method and did not describe any of its applications. Overall, the text favored a second type of bracketing along the wall plane, which was constructed by alternating single or two-tier brackets with plain joists. For example, for seven-*puzuo* and five-*puzuo* bracketing:

Seven-*puzuo* bracket-sets of single bracket [construction], with two branch [arms] and two lever arms [...]: If the lower branch [arm] uses the “stolen-heart” [construction], then use two single brackets and two plain joists atop the cap block. <Atop of which, boards will be placed horizontally to conceal rafters.>

Alternatively, only apply plain joists on top of two-tier brackets along the plane of the plaster channel.

單栱七鋪作兩杪兩昂 [...] 若下一杪偷心。則於櫨枋之上施兩令栱。兩素方。方上平鋪遮椽版。或隻於泥道重栱上施素方。<sup>774</sup>

Five-*puzuo* bracket-sets with one branch [arm] and one lever arm: If the lower branch [arm] uses the “stolen heart” [construction], then use one plain joist above a set of two-tier brackets along the plane of the plaster channel. On top of the [plain-] joist, use a single bracket. Apply the “rafter supporting joist” on top of the [single] bracket.

五鋪作一杪一昂。若下一杪偷心。則泥道重栱上施素方。方上又施令栱。栱上施承椽方。<sup>775</sup>

Notice the single and two-tier brackets described here are referring to fully carved individual members, unlike the shadow brackets carved in low relief. In addition, the concept of “plain joists (素方)” emphasized that the crosspieces used here were uncarved

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<sup>774</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f4, 13b.

<sup>775</sup> Ibid.

and undecorated, and not used to host wall clinging brackets.

These two different construction methods may have represented different building archetypes. Shadow or wall clinging brackets are dependent on the crosspiece, while single and two-tier brackets were used together with plain joists. A related distinction has been noted by previous scholars between the “bracket-layer (鋪作)” and the “bracket-set (枋栱)”. Although both terms appeared in the *Building Standards*, and were often used interchangeably, the two in fact have different structural implications.<sup>776</sup> The former highlighted the “piling”, or “stacking” of bracketing elements as the way they were assembled together, which was characteristic of crosspieces used along the wall plane. The latter was an amalgamation of “blocks (枋)” and “arms (栱)”, which gave emphasis to the individuality of each component that made up a set of brackets. While shadow brackets were often used with the bracket-layers of crosspieces, plain joists were often used to connect a row of bracket-sets composed of single and two-tier brackets.

Chen Mingda has aptly compared the structure of bracket-layers to that of the stacked-up “well ring”, which he believed to be one of the prototypes for Chinese timber frameworks.<sup>777</sup> The Buddha Hall is an exemplary demonstration of the “bracket-layer” and

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<sup>776</sup> Chen Mingda 1990, 40-44. In the text it was said that “Nowadays, *puzuo* refers to the piled layers of brackets and arms, the number of jutting [members] and their arrangement. 今以枋栱層數相疊，出跳多寡次序，謂之鋪作。” *Building Standards* (S82), f1, 13a.

<sup>777</sup> Chen Mingda 1990; Zhang Shiqing 1991, 49-51. Zhang Shiqing has pointed out that a so-called “well-shaped pavilion 井幹樓” was already mentioned in an Eastern Han text: “Erect the Terrace of Divine Spirits and a Well-structured Pavilion that rises 50 *zhang* high. 立神明台井幹樓高五十丈。” Yan Shigu annotated that: “A Well-structured Pavilion is a pavilion that is constructed by piling up logs to achieve its height. Its shape is like that of a well. Well-structured Pavilion has the balustrades above the well, in a quadrangle or octagonal plan. 井幹樓。積木而高為樓。若井之形也。井幹者。井上之欄也。其形或四

the associated “well-ring” structure, which seems to be a northern characteristic, used on the majority of buildings built prior to the end of the Northern Song dynasty, and present in a number of Jin period constructions.<sup>778</sup> The “well ring” structure was perhaps utilized in the early Tang as the major imperial tradition of the North. Textual evidence of its application in Tang imperial constructions can be found in the proposed design for the reconstruction of the Luminous Hall 明堂 at the Eastern Capital of Luoyang during the Zongzhang era (668-670 CE), after it was burnt down. The following line is found among a list of architectural components, recorded in the *Comprehensive Institutions* 通典:

[There are] fifteen layers of *fangheng*.

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角或八角。” See the *Book of Han* (S45), f25-2, 4b.

<sup>778</sup> It seems that crosspieces arranged in the “well ring” structure served an important architectural prototype in North China, dating to at least to around the end of the Northern Dynasties. Recent excavations have brought to light the earliest known image of architecture that used stacked crosspieces along the wall plane, seen in a mural painting from a Northern Wei period tomb excavated at Jiuyuan’gang 九原岡, Xin county, Shanxi province, within the vicinity of Mount Wutai. Featured in the image depicting a façade of the building, three layers of crosspieces were seen placed long the wall planes atop the columns and cap blocks. However, unlike later crosspieces that often used one layer of individually carved melon brackets, the cap blocks appear to be directly supporting the first layer of crosspieces. The bearing blocks between the crosspieces seem to be of blocks of the same size with the cap blocks. Additionally, the image did not show any indication of relief patterns on the crosspieces, which may reflect an early form of the well ring structure before it was decorated with shadow brackets. There are three jutting bracket-arms, with the view of the topmost cushioning brackets partly concealed by the eave. Although some have interpreted the brackets as protruding diagonally, instead of perpendicular to the wall plane, it was perhaps most likely an artistic rendering of perpendicular bracket-arms seen in perspective view. The bracketing arrangement seen in the Jiuyuan’gang tomb mural closely resembles a pottery house dated to the Northern Dynasties or Sui period, excavated from a tomb in Henan province, now in the collection of the Henan Provincial Museum. Although three jutting arms for each group of column-top brackets are modeled out, which also rest directly on cap blocks, the pottery house did not fully illustrate a layout of crosspieces along the wall plane. Since it is an architectural representation, we need to take into consideration the choices of the artisans as well as the limitations of its medium. In addition to the way that the jutting arms were placed, their ends appeared to be square-shaped, similar to the images of bracket-arms at Jiuyuan’gang, in contrast to the more commonly seen rounded lower corners. There are enough similarities between the Jiuyuan’gang and the Henan images that they could be regarded as representing the same type of structure.

方衡一十五重。<sup>779</sup>

Wang Guixiang has already correctly pointed out that the term “*fangheng* (方衡)” refers to the crosspieces mentioned in the *Building Standards*.<sup>780</sup> Based on the rest of the record, we know that the proposed Zongzhang Luminous Hall had a core structure and a pent roof, which had eight-*puzuo* and seven-*puzuo* bracketing respectively. Therefore, the total number of crosspieces needed for the structure added up to the exact number of fifteen.

However, as the southern practice of alternating bracket arms and plain joists gained popularity later on, it is instrumental to compare the usage of crosspieces on the Zongzhang Luminous Hall with the recommendations given in the *Building Standards*. The “Calculating Labor 功限” section of the text laid out rules for the calculation of the numbers of crosspieces, dependent on the specific type of position and formation of the bracket-sets. For instance:

Usage of crosspieces and other items as listed below, for [buildings with] bracket-sets between eight-*puzuo* down to four-*puzuo*, [listed as] per bay, [counting the crosspieces used at both] exterior and interior along the same *feng*-axis:

Crosspieces:

Use 11 pieces for an eight-*puzuo* bracket-set;

Use 8 pieces for a seven-*puzuo* bracket-set [...]

自八鋪作至四鋪作每一間一縫內外用方桁等下項：

方桁：

八鋪作：一十一條。七鋪作：八條。[...] <sup>781</sup>

A close examination reveals that the given numbers, 11 pieces and 8 pieces, were calculated based on the most complicated forms of eight- and seven- *puzuo* bracketing,

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<sup>779</sup> *Comprehensive Institutions* (S81), f44, 13b.

<sup>780</sup> Wang Guixiang 2011, 369-455.

<sup>781</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f17, 13b.

namely each jump with a filled-heart construction that branched out two-tier brackets, as illustrated in its plates. It is interesting to see that the imperial projects of the Tang and Song period shifted its bracketing from continuous “layers” to isolated “sets”. The number of required crosspieces also significantly increased over half a millennium, between the planning of the Zongzhang Luminous Hall and the writing of the *Building Standards*, resulting from the increase of crosspieces on the protruding parts of the bracket-sets and the decrease in crosspieces stacked along the wall plane.

The alternating brackets and plain joists structure, which could be seen as an alternative to the “well ring” structure formed by stacked crosspieces, reached its peak when the *Building Standards* adopted it as the imperial model. It is closely related to the full-fledged intercolumnar bracket-sets, officially recognized in the Northern Song text:

“Intercolumnar bracketing (*bǔjian puzuo*)” is the bracketing installed on cap-blocks that are rested on top of a lintel. <The vernacular term referring to it as “inter-step bracketing (*bùjian puzuo*)” is incorrect.> The central bay should use two sets of intercolumnar brackets, while the flanking side and the end bays should use one set per bay. Arrange the bracket-sets in a way that they are evenly distributed [along the façade].

凡於闌額上坐櫨料安鋪作者。謂之補間鋪作。今俗謂之步間者非。當心間須用補間鋪作兩朵。次間及梢間各用一朵。其鋪作分布令遠近皆勻。<sup>782</sup>

It is also interesting to consider the different visual effects accompanying the structural variations of bracketing. Writing in the late Northern Song, Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (fl. 1070-1075 CE) compared contemporary paintings of “architectural constructions (屋木)”

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<sup>782</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f4, 12a.

with previous ones in his *Records on Paintings Seen and Heard* 圖畫見聞志:

As for [artists of] the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties and preceding periods, down to such men as Guo Zhongshu (d. 977 CE) and Wang Shiyuan of the [present] empire, in painting towers and pavilions, [they] usually showed all four corners. [Their] bracket arms and blocks were *arrayed according to the strata of bracket-layers*. [Those bracketing members] showed clear distinctions between front and back without error in the marking lines. Painters of the present mainly relied on the rulers. Once set out to accomplish “ruled-line” painting, [they] *divide the [bracketing members] into separate bracket-sets*. [Their] brushwork is intricate and confusing, lacking any sense of vigorous beauty or easy elegance.<sup>783</sup>

如隋唐五代已前。洎國初郭忠恕。王士元之流。畫樓閣多見四角。其斗拱逐鋪作為之。向背分明，不失繩墨。今之畫者。多用直尺。一就界畫。分成斗拱。筆迹繁雜。無壯麗閒雅之意。<sup>784</sup>

What Guo Ruoxu had noted may have been the change in bracketing systems as manifested in painted representations. While previous painters depicted bracket-layers as “arrayed by layers of *puzuo* (逐鋪作為之)”, his contemporaries painted bracket-sets that were “divided into separate *dougong* (分成斗拱)”. Although the latter style was criticized as too intricate and confusing, it accurately captured the developments in building practices.

The *Building Standards* at times denotes the laying of bracketing with the measure word “layer (鋪)”, at other places it explains that the measure word for sets of brackets is “bunch (朵)”, which also reflected the different visual images of two distinct bracketing systems. (Figure 57) As a treatise written around the same time, the *Building Standards*

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<sup>783</sup> Translation after Susan Bush and Shih Hsio-yen 2012, 111-112, with major modifications; for an alternative translation see Alexander Soper 1951, 12. Italics added by me. Guo’s passage is better known for laying down the key aspects in mastering the painting of architectural constructions (屋木), as he noted, “When [one] paints architectural constructions, calculations should be faultless and brush drawings of even strength. Deep distances penetrate into space and a hundred diagonals recede from a single point.”

<sup>784</sup> Records on Paintings Seen and Heard (S112), f1, 8a.

mentioned two structures from the preceding periods used to construct column-top bracketing, namely the “well ring” or stacked crosspieces structure decorated with shadow brackets, and the alternating brackets and plain joists configuration that featured individually carved brackets. In practice, however, the text consistently used the latter method. This preference reflected the popularity of “bracket-sets” over “bracket-layers”. This change in imperial taste had strong influence on Northern areas where the bracket-layer tradition was predominantly used. A general trend had then started that caused bracket-sets to be outwardly smaller to allow more intercolumnar sets to be tightly arranged along the cornice band. By the time of the Qing dynasty, the concept of the bracket-layer was completely lost in Northern imperial construction practices. Brackets were regularly referred to as sets, using a different measure word “cluster (攢)” in the *Construction Methods*.

Currently, the decorative pigment on the timber numbers of the Buddha Hall is mostly bleached by the sun, exposing the dark brown wood color. However, there is no doubt when first built, the entire structure was lavishly painted.<sup>785</sup> Remains of color paintings on the timber numbers of the Buddha Hall suggests it systematically used the red ochre (朱) and red lead (丹), corresponding to the “Red [Lead] Powder Decoration System (丹粉刷飾屋舍)” detailed in the *Building Standards*. For instance, as the text has

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<sup>785</sup> We can get a glimpse of the efforts went into color decorations from the building of the Mañjuśrī Pavilion at the Great Xingshansi discussed in the section “Building the Mañjuśrī Pavilions for The Empire” in Chapter 2 of this thesis. It should be noted that the Mañjuśrī Pavilion adopted the “Red and Green (解綠)” decoration system, which was also recorded in detail in the *Building Standards* (S82), f14, 11a-12a.

prescribed, “swallow tail (燕尾)” patterns were applied to bracket arms, and white-colored “borderlines (緣道)” were used on other structural elements such as end blocks.<sup>786</sup> Other details that closely matched the text include the color decoration on beams, including two-rafter beams and corer beams, both painted with red ochre and red lead respectively, with “the corner bevels between [the side and bottom surfaces] whitewashed with lime (下棱用白粉闌界緣道),” and are “hewed with both ends curving downward (兩盡頭斜訛向下),” to fit along the contours of the crescent beams.<sup>787</sup> (Figure 58)

A major discovery in recent years is made by the Tianjin University Team, concerning traces of the “Seven Red Ochre [Stripes] and Eight White Lime [Stripes] (七朱八白)” pattern seen on the architraves and the lowest level of crosspiece, with the corresponding number of decorative stripes.<sup>788</sup> The first and last stripes adjoin the flanking columns, which showcases what is referred to as “White [Stripes] Imbedded in the Columns (入柱白)” in the *Building Standards*.<sup>789</sup> Another new discovery is the white

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<sup>786</sup> See Fu Xi’nian 2001, 596-599. The term “swallow tail” is used in the “Red and Green Decoration System (解綠裝飾屋舍之制)” and “Red [Lead] Powder Decoration System” sections in the *Building Standards*. Detailed decoration methods for bracket-sets using geometric patterns are listed under the latter section. The painted decorations on bracket-arms at the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi, the Main Hall of the Nanchansi and the wooden cave facades of the Mogao caves all closely resemble this motif. Among the illustrations provided by the *Building Standards*, “swallow tail” motif is also seen used with the “Five Colored Decoration System (五彩遍裝)” and the “Jade Colored Decoration System (碾玉裝).”

<sup>787</sup> The sides and bottom of these beams are covered by paints of two different colors, a trait that points to the color combination of red ochre and red lead described in the “Red [Lead] Powder Decoration System” in the *Building Standards*.

<sup>788</sup> Tianjin Daxue Jianzhu Xueyuan et al. 2015b, 70-76, 85.

<sup>789</sup> “Seven Red Ochre [Stripes] and Eight White Lime [Stripes]” is also referred to as the “Eight White Lime [Stripes] (八白)”, a design for painted architectural decorations recorded in “Blue and Green Decoration System” and “Red [Lead] Powder Decoration System” in the *Building Standards* (S82), f14, 13a. The latter has a section dealing with decorations of architraves that detailed the form of the “Eight White Lime [Stripes]”. However, the motif was already in use prior to the Tang dynasty, predating the compilation of the



plaster used to add plastic decorations to the bracket-sets. It is typically applied on top of the cap-blocks and as well as other bracket-blocks, forming a slanting slope that is applied on the “ears of the blocks (料耳)”, extending to wrap around the structural member supported by the blocks above. The plasters visually form white wedges that blend in with the rest of the decoration painted in red ochre and white lime. Similar practices can be observed in other official architecture of the Liao dynasty,<sup>790</sup> and in representations in murals of high status tombs. All these findings lay a foundation for investigations into the relationship between the official buildings of the Song and Liao courts and the architecture remains at Foguangsi, further providing possible connections to the architecture and its decoration in the Tang dynasty.

As a final point, the architecture and decoration of the Buddha Hall reflects an

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*Building Standards.* In addition to references in textual sources, it can also be seen in decorations of funerary chambers, cave temples as well as in bias-relieves. This motif was especially widespread during the Tang, Song and Jin dynasties, appearing on extant structures from this period in both North and South China. Most cases belong to high status funerary structures located in the Guanzhong region dating to the early Tang. Examples that are roughly contemporary with the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi include: Wooden cave facades built no later than the Northern Song dynasty at Mogao Caves, Dunhuang, Gansu province; the Main Hall of Baoguosi at Ningbo, Fujian province; the Zhakou White Pagoda 闍口白塔; and the Twin Pagoda at Monastery of the Retreated Immortals 靈隱寺雙塔 dating to no later than early Northern Song at Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and so forth. The Patriarch Pagoda standing next to the Buddha Hall, which was built prior to early Tang dynasty, also bore the motif. However, in all the above mentioned examples, the painted or carved “Eight White Lime [Stripes]” differ from the prescriptions in the *Building Standards*. Additionally, the “White [Stripes] Imbedded in the Columns” method (described as “to apply the Eight White Lime [Stripes] motif, make the two ends of the eight white lime stripes on both side adjoin the flanking columns; do not use red paint in between [the ends and the columns]”) was only seen in the murals of Changle Princess 長樂公主’s Tomb from early Tang. As a result, the painted architectural decoration of the Buddha Hall is the single known example where the actual ornamentation perfectly corresponds to the regulations of the *Building Standards*.

<sup>790</sup> This include the Bodhisattva Pavilion 觀音閣 and the Mountain Gate at Dulesi, Ji county, Hebei province, the Main Hall at Fengguosi 奉國寺, Yi county, Liaoning province; and the Mañjuśrī Hall at Geyuansi 閣院寺, Laiyuan, Hebei province.

emphasis on a “frontal view”, which differed from the sides and the rear.<sup>791</sup> Additionally, the landscaped path leading to the Buddha Hall allowed this frontal view to unfold in front of a view in a controlled way.<sup>792</sup> Along this designed path, the bracketing on its front façade served an important role in the overall image of the building, especially when visitors were looking up at the hall from the lower courtyards, or after they just climbed up and stood in front of the entrance. In contrast to a leveled, open ground, the mountainous setting undoubtedly add much to the grandeur of the building, and it may not be a coincidence Tang dynasty built its Daming Palace on the highest ground in Chang’an, the Longshou龍首原, and the aforementioned Hanyuan Hall in was constructed with a majestic platform measuring more than ten meters above the ground.

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<sup>791</sup> The most obvious indication is the use of the “filled heart” construction with irregular-shaped cross arms at the intercolumnar positions.

<sup>792</sup> Walking up to the hall from the first level of terraced ground, visitors have a perfect view of the upper part of the open portico, the bracketing above the eave columns and the overhanging roof. After they step onto the second level of terraced ground, the main ridge becomes hidden from sight, and soon the entire building is blocked by cave houses built along the edge of the third level of terraced ground where the hall is located. For further access, visitors have to climb up a steep flight of stairs behind an arched doorway, quickly finding themselves emerging from the other side of the cave houses, standing on the edge of the third level of terraced ground. As previously discussed, the Buddha Hall was first constructed with an open portico. Hanging curtains would have concealed a view of the space behind the eave columns. However, if the line of sight were clear, the viewer would be able to see the plank doors and mullioned windows. When a person of average height was standing on the edge of the third level of terraced ground and viewing the Buddha Hall at a distance of about 11 m from the eave columns, their line of sight could just reach the level of the first layer of crosspieces above the second row of columns through the portico space. The second band of bracketing is not visible from this perspective, except the cap blocks and the wall plane between them. If the doors are open and the interior sufficiently illuminated, then the person will also have a full view of the icons housed inside.

## **CONCLUDING NOTES: MOUNTAIN MONASTICISM AT MOUNT WUTAI AND BEYOND**

The popularity of Mountain Buddhism in Tang China saw the flourishing development of mountain monasteries. Although most of the sites are no longer preserved in north China, based on the design of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi, a new trend of development had appeared, which centered around timber structures rather than excavated caves as seen in earlier traditions of cave temples. The origin of this change can be traced to the developments of timber-framed mountain architecture in south China during the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties. As a result, cave shrines were no longer the primary Buddhist space. However, the religious importance of the mountain setting of cave shrines was not entirely abandoned. Altars and foundations were still built directly on the bedrock, in order to preserve the symbolic importance of “mountains”. Such a marriage between the foundations of cave shrines and the façades of surface monasteries was best exemplified by the case of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi, located on Mount Wutai.

In addition to adopting rock-carved altars and foundations, mountain monasteries developed other notable traits. In many cases, the unique rocky settings of its architecture required different structural design distinctive from the metropolitan monasteries spread out on a flat ground. This new development was reflected on Mount Wutai as well. At the Monastery of the Dharma Lotus of the Dali Era 大歷法華寺, Ennin described its architecture as:

A storied pavilion has been constructed on a steep prominence with decorated towers

and jeweled halls on four sides of its precipices, freely arranged on different levels of the ground. Galleries and houses [stand close together] like teeth on a comb. The scriptures, images, and treasures are lovely beyond description.<sup>793</sup>

重閣於峻崖上建立。四方崖面盡是花樓寶殿。任地高低。堂舍比櫛。經像寶物。絕妙難言。<sup>794</sup>

When the renowned travel writer and geographer Xu Xiake 徐霞客 (1587-1641 CE) visited Mount Wutai in Chongzhen 崇禎 6 (1633 CE), he wrote about encountering a Vimalakīrti Pavilion 維摩閣 in his travelogue. The pavilion was located to the north of the rock named Bimoyan 閉魔岩 (var. 秘魔岩). Xu described its architecture as having two stories, which was “built on top [of two boulders]”. He noted that “according to the formation of the boulders [beneath], posts [used to support] the [Vimalakīrti] Pavilion vary in lengths”, and admired the “suspended corridors (复道)” used to connect different parts of the structure.

Although the earliest extant example of architecture constructed on cliffs is the Midair Suspension Monastery 懸空寺 at Hunyuan 渾源, Shanxi province, whose structures were largely the result of Ming and Qing period restorations, judging from Tang and later accounts, earlier monasteries in this style must have existed at Mount Wutai as well. (Figure 59) Another mountain monastic compound known to us is the Nunnery of the Sweet Dewdrops 甘露庵 at Taining 泰寧, Fujian province.<sup>795</sup> (Figure 60) Established in

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<sup>793</sup> Translation modified after Edwin O. Reischauer 1955, 265.

<sup>794</sup> Bai Huawen et al., annot. 2007, 307.

<sup>795</sup> The nunnery was destroyed in fire in 1961 CE, shortly after its “rediscovery” in 1958 CE. Fortunately, the buildings were surveyed in 1959 CE by a team of architectural historians from the Southeast University 東南大學 led by Zhang Buqian 張步騫. They left behind valuable accounts, photographs and measured drawings of its architecture. See Fujiansheng Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui 1959, 79-82; Zhang Buqian 1982, 118-143. Now the nunnery complex has been completely rebuilt in 1964 CE. Its reconstruction was mainly

Shaoxing 紹興 16 (1146 CE) during the Southern Song period,<sup>796</sup> the Nunnery of the Sweet Dewdrops was a part of the mountain monastic tradition at Taining that dates back to the Tang period according to the local gazetteer.<sup>797</sup> Halls and pavilions in the following two decades were built in mountainous settings, with platforms and corridors extending over cliffs, supported by posts or scaffolding that allowed them to adapt to changing heights of the terrain,<sup>798</sup> a technique similar to the Midair Suspension Monastery, as well as precedents on the nearby Mount Wutai described by Ennin and other travelers.

In addition to northern and southern China, the construction of cave temples and mountain monasteries were also immensely popular in southeast China (roughly corresponding to present-day Sichuan 四川 and Chongqing 重慶 provinces) during the Tang and Song periods.<sup>799</sup> The region had always been famous for its mountainous

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based on the survey data and old photographs.

<sup>796</sup> The earliest inscription at the nunnery was found at under a purlin at the Conjured Pavilion 蜃閣. It detailed the date of its construction to Shaoxing 16 (1146 CE). This corresponds with a stele inscription found on site that claimed this year as the date of establishment. See Fujian sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 1959, 79-80.

<sup>797</sup> The *Gazetteer of Taining* 泰寧縣志 listed a monastery built at the Feng Rock 豐巖 during the Tianyou 天祐 era (904-919 CE) of Tang, among other mountain monasteries built and restored in the subsequent dynasties.

<sup>798</sup> According to inscriptions, Guanyin'ge 觀音閣 was established in Shaoxing 23 (1153 CE), and the Nan'ange 南安閣 in Qiandao 1 (1165 CE). There are other inscriptions recording later renovations, as well as writings and drawings left by early travelers. See Zhang Buqian 1982, 118-119.

<sup>799</sup> The area's physical remoteness had contributed to its relative independence from the Central Plain in ancient times, and had helped it stay in contacts with Central, South and Southeast Asia. "Cliff tombs (崖墓)" that involved carving into cliff sides started along rivers and gorges in the Chengdu region as early as Han dynasty, and some showed preliminary, yet unmistakable Buddhist iconography. However, Sichuan's population dropped rapidly after the fall of Han, eventually devastated in the fourth century under an attack by the Eastern Jin. Sichuan was largely rebuilt until the Sui and Tang period. After yet another period of instability during the early Tang, the area started flourishing again around the late ninth century. See Nancy S. Steinhardt 2014, 70-77, and 362-363 (notes 138-139) for further references.

landscape with loft peaks and high plateaus, making it an ideal location for mountain monasticism. Devotional niches and colossal Buddhas that dotted the mountains, which mainly followed northern precedents, had already been extensively studied. Lesser known are the mountain temples and monasteries housed in those mountains. The buildings themselves may be results of repeated renovation and reconstruction. However, their site and history, nonetheless, provided valuable information for a variety of early mountain monastic designs. For instance, the architecture of the Great Buddha Monastery 大佛寺 at Laitan 涑灘 vividly illustrates the practice of carving into mountains and situating a monastic foundation on existing rocks. (Figure 61) The Temple of Celestial Master's Craven 天師洞 at Mount Qingcheng 青城山, on the other hand, preserved a niched cave and its entrance hall at the end of sequence of buildings arranged on terraced grounds. (Figure 62) The Cloudy Rocks Monastery 雲巖寺 at Mount Doutuan 寶圖山 featured buildings that were set atop the mountain peak. (Figure 63) The Adorned Rock Monastery 華巖寺 in Chongqing, in contrast, was constructed into the shallow cravens of the mountainside and sheltered by overhanging cliffs. (Figure 64)

Additionally, mountain Buddhism was transmitted to Japan and developed into new heights. In addition to the previously mentioned religious passion of mountain cults steered among the Japanese elites,<sup>800</sup> who competed to patronize pilgrims and send offerings to sacred mountain sites in China, the tradition of mountain monasticism (Jap. 山

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<sup>800</sup> See "Concluding Notes" of Part I of this thesis.

嶽佛教, a.k.a. 山林佛教) was brought to Japan by travelling Japanese monks, such as Saichō and Kūkai 空海 (a.k.a. Master Kōbō 弘法大師, 774-835 CE), and has since flourished in Japan. More remarkable is the spread and adoption of the architectural tradition of mountain monasteries together with this form of Buddhist practice, described by the prominent Sino-Japanese historian Kinomiya Yasuhiko as “consequential”, resulting in a “rapid transformation of style” of Japanese Buddhist architecture.<sup>801</sup>

The transmission of mountain monasticism to Japan saw the rise of buildings that shared the common tendency to place their inner sanctum close to the mountain, or directly excavated into the rock face. Researchers have therefore named this genre of architecture as “monasteries built at grotto mouths or under overhang cliffs (岩窟・岩陰型仏堂)”.<sup>802</sup> For example, the Main Hall 本堂 at the Fudōji 不動寺, Shiga 滋賀prefecture, is composed of three parts: a small sanctum carved into the mountain, a main worship hall, and a front portico. (Figure 65) The structure itself was dated stylistically to the early Kamakura period, however, the monastery was already founded in Jōgan 1 (859 CE) by Enchin, who travelled to Tang dynasty China in the mid-ninth century. A similar structure with a later date can be found at the Natadera 那谷寺 on Mount Kōya 高野山, Ishikawa 石川prefecture. (Figure 66) In addition, the type of monasteries in the so-called “overhanging

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<sup>801</sup> Kinomiya Yasuhiko 1955, 190-196. According to Kinomiya, one of the most significant impacts of the mountain monasticism brought back to Japan by travelling monks was that, in contrast to Nara building traditions that feature axial and symmetrical layouts, the Heian period mountain monasteries had to adjust to a terrestrial setting, and was therefore able to break away from the rigid plans.

<sup>802</sup> This term was established as the main subject of a research team headed by Asakawa Shigeo at the Tottori University of Environmental Studies. See Hakozaki Kazuhisa, Nakashima Toshihiro, and Asakawa Shigeo 2013, 69-84; Suzuki Tomohiro, Nakashima Toshihiro and Asakawa Shigeo 2014, 137-156.

style (懸造)”, previously regarded as unique for mountain monasteries in Japan, are comparable to the Chinese architectural prototype represented by the Midair Suspension Monastery and the Nunnery of the Sweet Dewdrops. An extant early example can be found at the Nageiredō 投入堂 of the Sanbutsuji 三仏寺, located on Mount Mitoku 三徳山, Tottori 鳥取 prefecture.<sup>803</sup> (Figure 67) At the Ryūganji 龍岩寺 located at Oita 大分, Kyūshū 九州, a Worship Hall was rebuilt beneath an overhanging cliff, inside of which three Buddhist sculptures dated to the late Heian period were housed. (Figure 68)

As a brief final point, the practice of building upper and lower precincts may have also emerged as a result of the flourishing of mountain monasticism. A case in point has been introduced in the abovementioned biography of Dharmamitra, who belonged to a larger group of eminent monks who migrated from the north to the south during the period of division.<sup>804</sup> Dharmamitra’s biography also offers one of the earliest records about the upper and lower monastery system. His Dinglinsi consisted of an accessible “lower precinct (下寺)” at the foot of the mountain while at the same time it featured another secluded “upper precinct (上寺)” located atop the mountain peak. Another example involves a similar account that reported Huiyong 慧永’s relocation from the foot of Mount Lu 廬山 to its peak, building a new precinct there.<sup>805</sup>

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<sup>803</sup> The Nageiredō structure was built around the 12th century, late Heian period. Nonetheless, the tradition of “overhanging style” may be traced back to the Nara period.

<sup>804</sup> The Eastern Grove Monastery 東林寺 built for the Buddhist master Huiyuan 慧遠 at Lushan 廬山, discussed below, is another renowned example.

<sup>805</sup> *The Biography of Eminent Monks* mentioned Huiyong as the “fellow monk (同門)” of Huiyuan, who studied with the same master. Huiyong was already residing at the Western Grove 西林 at the Lushan, and he had invited Huiyuan to establish a monastery in the same mountain. It was also Huiyong who persuaded



During the Taihe era (366-371 CE) of the Jin, [Huiyong] built a monastic compound in Xunyang at the foot of the North Peak of Mount Lu. [Hui]yong thought there was too much noise and too many disruptions at the foot of the North Peak, so [he] moved atop the South Peak, and constructed thatched houses and erected [timber-]framed halls there. The mist and auroras comingled, [therefore the compound] was named as Concentrative Dwellings of the Skimming Clouds. Thereupon [he] lived far from human affairs as a recluse on this shrouded peak. [He] wore ragged clothes, ate a vegetarian diet, and focused on meditation and chanting [scriptures].

以晉太和中。於尋陽廬山北嶺下。創立寺廟。[慧]永以北嶺下。尚多喧動。移於南嶺之上。築葺房宇。構起堂殿。煙霞交接。名曰凌雲精舍。於是棄絕人事。隱居幽岳。弊衣菜食。禪誦為務。<sup>806</sup>

The use of upper and lower monastery arrangement is observed in north China as well, such as the Upper and Lower Guangshengsi 廣勝寺, whose present structures date to the Yuan dynasty period.<sup>807</sup> Such a monastic scheme is still quite commonly practiced in Japan.<sup>808</sup>

From my examinations of the Chinese mountain monasticism and its unique architectural tradition in a wider context, I have demonstrated how the “Buddhist occupation” transformed the perception of the mountain and made a lasting impact on its landscape. From the Jin dynasty onwards, mountains gradually invalidated some of its stigma of being a place of fear and instead became locations of preference for temples and monasteries. However, it took another century for the notion of sacred mountains to be

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Huan Yin to build the Easter Grove for Huiyuan.

<sup>806</sup> *Collected Fragments from the Biographies of Renowned Monks* 名僧傳抄 (X77n1523), 0356c.

<sup>807</sup> Another interesting example is the Upper and Lower Huaiyansi 華嚴寺 in Datong, Shanxi province.

Instead of occupying a setting on mountain top, the Main Hall of the Upper Huaiyansi was situated above an extremely high platform. For more on Huaiyansi, see Liu Xiangyu 2014.

<sup>808</sup> For example, the Daigoji 醍醐寺 in Nara, Japan.

fully established during the Sui-Tang period to attract pilgrims on a regular basis.<sup>809</sup> Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-fang have astutely brought to our attention the analogy between “mountain” and “monastery”,<sup>810</sup> which as I have discussed, was equally ubiquitous throughout the architectural history of India. Interestingly enough, the often-cited metaphor of “Mountain Gate 山門” may in fact be a literal phrase when it concerns the mega monastery of Mount Wutai during the Tang times. Before leaving the area, Ennin actually saw a pavilion gate which was, both literally and figuratively, the southern “Mountain Gate” to the Wutai.<sup>811</sup> The populating of a mountain, not only building at its foot, but also carving into its side and constructing atop, has made the mountain themselves “mega monasteries”.<sup>812</sup>

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<sup>809</sup> Raoul Birnbaum 1983, 5-23. While previous scholars have outlined the significances of numinous Grotto and sacred mountains in native Chinese beliefs and the imported Buddhist traditions, treatments of the architectural manifestation of the subject, which is equally important, has been lacking. It would bring the philosophical aspects to bear on the built environment.

<sup>810</sup> Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-fang 1992, 1-38

<sup>811</sup> Bai Huawen et al., annot. 2007, 314.

<sup>812</sup> Lin Wei-cheng discussed the idea of seeing Mount Wutai as “mega monasteries” in his recent monograph (Lin Wei-cheng 2014).

## EPILOGUE

In the preceding chapters, my discussions are centered around the art and architectural remains of Foguangsi since the Tang dynasty period, and set against the historical and political background that gave birth to the site. As I have mentioned, the Foguangsi, including its main Buddha Hall, was also subject to major renovations and alterations from the end of Tang dynasty onwards. After being established as a state-sponsored Buddhist monastery, the Foguangsi was sometimes deserted and thereupon claimed by the locals, which was then often followed by retrievals and renovations by the court of later dynasties. However, since the study of Chinese architectural history has been deeply ingrained in the conjoined notions of “dating (斷代)”<sup>813</sup> and “reconstruction (復原)”<sup>814</sup>, the rich palimpsest of renovations, alterations, and additions accumulated throughout their long existence has largely been rendered inconsequential.

In the epilogue, I seek to take full advantage of a cultural biographical approach, which acknowledges this continual changing ownership with shifts from one social context to another, in order to briefly address this previous neglect of the “social life”<sup>815</sup> of Foguangsi.<sup>816</sup> Building archaeological evidence<sup>817</sup> will be examined together with

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<sup>813</sup> Qi Yingtao 1981, 1, and 7-9. See also id. 1965 and id. 1986.

<sup>814</sup> Gao Tian 2011, 15-16.

<sup>815</sup> Also referred to as the “social life of things” or the “cultural biography of things”. See Arjun Appadurai 1986; Igor Kopytoff 1986; Tom Bloemers, Henk Kars and Arnold Van der Valk 2010.

<sup>816</sup> For example, later additions to the complex were brushed off in Liang’s reports as “inferior”. Subsequent researchers often followed the precedent set by Liang and his compatriots, ignoring what they labeled as “recent buildings”.

<sup>817</sup> Investigations in building archaeology put an emphasis precisely on successive building phases and the overlapping layers of different ages, including the repairs and restorations that make up the whole of a

epigraphic materials<sup>818</sup> and received texts to illustrate the life and time of the site, its relationship with the sacred Wutai Mountains and its interaction with its patrons, occupants and visitors. The meaning of the site, as well as the varying perceptions of its place and landscape by different individuals, social groups, and cultures, in different periods, all left significant physical marks on the structure, especially in the negotiation of its identities between the imperial and local. Only by retracing its rich history can we do justice to its rich, varied social life.

#### **FOGUANGSI'S SONG-JIN TRANSITION AND A NEW SOURCE FROM THE "ANCIENT" BAMBOO GROVE MONASTERY**

One of the significant changes that took place at Foguangsi involves a building that is no longer standing today. It was known as the Great Pavilion of Maitreya 彌勒大閣, and was once a prominent structure at the Foguangsi. It was built by the abbot Faxing 法興 with the offering he had collected, and completed shortly before the Huichang Persecution that occurred in the 840s CE during the Tang dynasty. According to Yanyi's account in the *Extended Records*,<sup>819</sup> the Great Pavilion of Maitreya housed over 10,000 images, including both statues and paintings that featured the Seventy-two Worthies (七十二位聖賢),<sup>820</sup> the

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building.

<sup>818</sup> There are more than 40 inscriptions recovered from on the beams, door slabs and partition walls between bracket-sets of the Main Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi. Additionally, other buildings within the complex, as well as pagodas, steles, sūtra pillars and ritual instruments also yielded epigraphic evidence.

<sup>819</sup> T51n2099, 1121b. The Great Pavilion of Maitreya was also mentioned in the biography of Faxing found in the *Song Biographies* (T50n2061), 0882c. Two accounts have similar accounts concerning the statues housed at the pavilion.

<sup>820</sup> The tradition of "Seventy-two Worthies" was not mentioned elsewhere, according to Jōjin's travelogue,

Eight Nāga Kings (八大龍王), and the Sacred Images of All Monasteries at Mount Wutai (臺山諸寺聖象).<sup>821</sup> In a late-9th or early-10th-century travelogue preserved among the Dunhuang manuscripts, an anonymous pilgrim who visited the Foguangsi wrote about visiting a certain “Great Pavilion of Maitreya 彌勒大閣”, and described it as a structure “three-stories [in height and] seven-bays [in width]”. They also recounted venerating the “Seventy-two Worthies, ten thousand Bodhisattvas, and sixteen Lohans” housed inside.<sup>822</sup> It is very likely that the aforementioned pavilion structure built in the early-ninth century had survived the Huichang Persecution against all odds.<sup>823</sup>

Today, the Great Pavilion of Maitreya is no longer extant, and it is not clear when the structure disappeared, or under what circumstances. Before the contents of his travelogue became known, the architecture was assumed to have been destroyed in the Buddhist persecutions. It had also been argued that during the post-persecution restorations under Emperor Xuanzong, the Great Buddha Hall must have been erected on the ruins of

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they were avatars of Mañjuśrī, well known to the Mount Wutai reign.

<sup>821</sup> Huijiao did not mention the “Sacred Images of All Monasteries at Mount Wutai” in the *Song Biographies*, which I believe may have been an alternative name for the kind of “Panoramas of Mount Wutai (五臺山圖)” still preserved at Dunhuang. It was probably painted as murals at the Maitreya Pavilion, either inside or outside on the plastered walls of the structure. It was said that in Kaiyuan 開元 4 (716 CE), Shenying 神英 had a vision of the [Conjured] Fahua Cloister [化]法華院, with a “Vein[-like] Network of the Ten Monasteries at Mount Wutai (五臺山十寺血脈圖)” painted on the exterior of the Triple Gate 三門 (i.e. Mountain Gate 山門), which may refer to this kind of murals. For discussions of Shenying’s entering into the Conjured Fahua Cloister, see Raoul Birnbaum 1986.

<sup>822</sup> A fragment of the travelogue was preserved among Dunhuang manuscripts, now numbered S.397 in the collection of the British Museum, London.

<sup>823</sup> The structure that stood after the post-persecution Foguangsi seemed little changed, since the original records of it as having “three stories and seven bays” matched with the description by the visitors who saw it a century later. See *Song Biographie* (T50n2061), 0882c. The *Further Records* (T51n2099), 1121b, had “three stories and nine bays”, which may have been a mistake or a textual corruption.

the Great Pavilion of Maitreya.<sup>824</sup> Nevertheless, in the same travelogue quoted above, the pilgrim also reported visiting a “Great Buddha Hall 大佛殿” at the Foguangsi, which had “a seven-bay façade, containing a Buddha triad in the middle, flanked by Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on one side and Bodhisattva Samantabhadra on the other”. It undoubtedly refers to the Great Buddha Hall that is still standing today. Therefore, the Great Buddha Hall and the Great Pavilion of Maitreya must have coexisted at the time of the travelogue.

It has since been suggested by Fu Xi’nian that the pavilion was previously situated on the second level of the terraced monastic compound. This reconstruction placed the Great Maitreya Pavilion on the central axis of the monastery, situated right in front of the Great Buddha Hall.<sup>825</sup> (Figure 69) Given the relatively narrow space on the second terrace and the conjectured scope of the pavilion, Fu drew the plan of the pavilion as stretching all the way to overlap with a structure that is currently standing on the second terrace, facing south, often referred to as the Hall of Mañjuśrī.<sup>826</sup> In order for Fu’s reconstruction plan to stand, the Great Pavilion of Maitreya and the Hall of Mañjuśrī must have never co-existed.

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<sup>824</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng speculated about this possibility in his 1944-45 report (Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944, 13-61). Chai Zejun followed Liang’s opinion, nonetheless changing Liang’s speculative tone to an assured narrative, claiming that most of the wooden structures at the Foguangsi were leveled to the ground during the Huichang Persecution, and only few funerary pagodas remained (Chai Zejun 1982, 83-89).

<sup>825</sup> Fu Xi’nian 1998a, 234-244. Lin Wei-cheng further argues that the iconography inside the pavilion would have attested to its central and intermediating position between the lower frontcourt and the uppermost level of the monastic complex. See Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 197-199.

<sup>826</sup> A large stone column base found half-buried underground, located in the courtyard of the Qing dynasty structure Pavilion of Sweet Winds and Flowery Rains at the Foguangsi. Fu determined the size of the pavilion’s ground plan with the assumption that this column platform is originally from the lost pavilion structure and is in its original position. See Fu Xi’nian 1998a, 234-244. I return to the question of this column platform in my later discussions.

Yet with light shed by a previously unpublished source found on a pagoda located close to the ruins of the “Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery 古竹林寺”,<sup>827</sup> this assumption will be questioned with the reconstruction problematized as well, and alternative plans for the location of the Great Pavilion of Maitreya will be proposed. This new understanding will also force us to take another look at the possible changes that occurred at the Foguangsi, both in the overall layout of the architecture and in the makeup of its monastic community.

First of all, however, it is also important to introduce the background and history of the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery, which turned out to be inartistically related to the Foguangsi. The monastery was not well preserved and no longer in use, but one can still visit its ruins about 500 meters to the northeast of the Foguangsi. Similar to Foguangsi, the monastic complex of the Ancient Bamboo Monastery was set on a terraced ground hewed out of a mountain slope, exposing a section of cliff on the north side. Its underground remains have yet to be excavated, which spreads about 60 meters north to south and 40 meters east to west. Note that the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery should not to be confused with the “Bamboo Grove Monastery 竹林寺” much further away, which is located close to the Monastery of the Southern Mountain 南山寺 (Map 3).

According to a miraculous tale included in both the *Expanded Record* and the *Song Biographies*, a monastery associated with the name “*zhulin* (lit. “Bamboo Grove, or

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<sup>827</sup> The stele was retrieved during field investigations conducted by the author in collaboration with Tianjin University. During the first investigation, only a few photographs were taken, based on which I prepared my transcription. However, when we went back to make rubbings and therefore get a better reproduction of the stele to revise the transcription, we found the stele missing.

Bamboo Forest)” at Mount Wutai was first envisioned by monk Fazhao 法照 in Dali 2 (767 CE).<sup>828</sup> It was said that he first saw a vision of the monastery, together with the Foguangsi, appear in a gruel bowl while eating at a refectory in a monastery on the Southern Marchmount 南嶽.<sup>829</sup> Several days later, Fazhao saw several other monasteries on Mount Wutai in his bowl,<sup>830</sup> and was finally encouraged to visit the sacred mountain. According to Yanyi’s account, when staying at the Foguangsi:<sup>831</sup>

[Fazhao] went out from the room in the late evening, and suddenly saw one white ray of light coming from below the northern mountain. [It] came in front of Fazhao. The Master then went into the hall, and asked the fellow monks, “What is this illuminous vison?” The monks replied, “This place often has this inconceivable light of the Great Spirit [Mañjuśrī].” After having heard this, [Fa]zhao immediately put on full regalia, and followed the light on foot, finally reaching [a place] about 1 *li* to the northeast of the monastery.<sup>832</sup> There was a mountain hill. At the foot of the hill, there was a creek. A stone gate stood to the north of the creek. [... Fazhao] entered the gate and walked towards the north for almost 5 *li*, when he suddenly saw a golden gate tower that seemed about a hundred *chi* in height, flanked by towers on both side. [Fazhao] gradually approached where the gate was, and then saw a monastery.

是夜後分。因出房戶。忽見一道白光。從北山下來。至法照前。師遽入堂內。乃問眾僧曰。是何光相。僧答言。此處常有大聖不思議之光相。照聞已。即

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<sup>828</sup> An extensive recount of Fazhao’s encounter with the conjured Zhulinsi can be found in Susan Andrews 2004, 81-88. Shinohara Koichi have provided wonderful discussions on the legends of conjured temples in general. Andrews, in addition, examined the conjured Bamboo Grove Monastery in the context of other conjured monasteries at Wutaishan. See Shinohara Koichi 2012, 1-20; see also Susan Andrews 2013, 139-141.

<sup>829</sup> Foguangsi was already well established at that time, but Fazhao had nonetheless never set foot on Wutaishan, nor did he ever see the Foguangsi.

<sup>830</sup> Including the Avatamsaka Monastery, which like the Foguangsi, was already established.

<sup>831</sup> When Fazhao reached the Foguangsi, he described it as “truly like the monastery [he] had seen in the alms bowl vision”. Note that in contrast to the visionary Bamboo Grove Monastery, then only a vision that appeared in Fazhao’s gruel bowl, the Foguangsi was already established at his time. It was from Foguangsi that Fazhao was later directed to enter into a conjured monastery that corresponded with his vision.

<sup>832</sup> The translation heretofore is after Marylin M. Rhie 1970, 18-19, with modifications.



具威儀。步尋其光。遂至寺東北約一裡許。有山。山下有澗。澗北有一石門。  
[...] 入門向北而行。將至五裡。忽見一金門樓。可高百尺。兼有掖樓。漸至  
門所。方見一寺。<sup>833</sup>

The conjured monastery Fazhao entered bore a plaque with the inscription “Bamboo Grove Monastery of the Great Spirit 大聖竹林之寺”. Its entrance was about 1 *li* to the northeast of the Foguangsi, corresponding to the location of the ruins of the so-called Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery. However, it was said that the “Bamboo Grove Monastery 竹林寺”,<sup>834</sup> later attributed to Fazhao in honor of this vision, was not located on the exact spot where he had the visions. Instead, he chose to place his monastery near the Central Terrace, 15 *li* south to the Avatamsaka Monastery 華嚴寺, corresponding to the location of the present-day Bamboo Grove Monastery.<sup>835</sup> Fazhao left only an inscribed stone behind at the place where he encountered the conjured monastery.<sup>836</sup> In addition, historical records, as well as the newly found epigraphic material, indicate that so-called Ancient Bamboo

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<sup>833</sup> *Expanded Records* (T51n2099), 1114b.

<sup>834</sup> Fazhao only took the “Bamboo Grove” part of the original inscription he saw on the plaque of the conjured monastery, “Bamboo Grove Monastery of the Grate Spirit”, and left out the part “Great Spirit (大聖)”, often used to refer to Mañjuśrī in the Wutaishan context.

<sup>835</sup> As I explain below, received texts attribute the founding of the Bamboo Grove Monastery to the Tang dynasty and its founder as Fazhao. The location of the site is most likely original, once visited by Ennin, Rama Śrīnivāsa and Jōjin among others. Nevertheless, its monastic architecture was completely rebuilt. The earliest remains in the monastery was a Song dynasty Sūtra pillar dated to Tiansheng 天聖 2 (1024 CE). Compared to statues, Sūtra pillars are much less likely to have been relocated, and therefore they are a more reliable source of history and dating.

<sup>836</sup> This discrepancy between the locations of the two monasteries of bamboo grove, namely the envisioned and the later physically reproduced ones, may shed light to Zanning’s different account in the *Song Biographies*, where he may have intentionally “corrected” the distance Fazhao walked from Foguangsi to the conjured Zhulinsi from “1 *li*” to “50 *li*”. Yanyi was probably more informed than Zanning, however, the latter’s *Song Biographies* must have exerted wider influence. Zanning also claimed the monastery Fazhao founded was located at the place where he had the visions. Both versions of the tale maintain that Fazhao saw miraculous light, and followed it on foot from Foguangsi. From the point of literary creation or storying telling, it would be quite unreasonable to have him walk 50 *li* and back within one night.

Grove Monastery did not come into existence much later than Fazhao's time.<sup>837</sup>

In Kaicheng 開成 5 (840 CE), the Japanese pilgrim monk Ennin visited a “Bamboo Grove Monastery” on Mount Wutai, which he described as located near the Central Terrace, consistent with the location of the present-day Bamboo Grove Monastery originally founded by Fazhao. Ennin recorded almost all the renowned monastic establishments at that time, including the ones he did not have a chance to visit, such as the Foguangsi. However, he never mentioned the existence of the other, presumably more “ancient”, Bamboo Grove Monastery near the Southern Terrace, which he would have at least heard about. In a late-ninth or early-tenth century Dunhuang manuscript (P. 3931), now collected in the National Library of France, the Indian monk Rama Śrīnivāsa (a.k.a. Master Puhua 普化大師) recorded his travels in Mount Wutai in chronological order.<sup>838</sup> He was said to have departed from the Avataṃsaka Monastery 華嚴寺, then visiting monasteries he referred to as the “Bamboo Grove 竹林” and the “Golden Pavilion 金閣” during the day, before reaching the Southern Terrace, where he stayed for the night. The location of the Bamboo Grove Monastery Rama Śrīnivāsa visited again corresponds to the Bamboo Grove Monastery of the Central Terrace.

Another Dunhuang manuscript entitled “Lyrical Songs of Mount Wutai 五臺山曲子” (S.4012), dated to Tiancheng 天成 4 (929 CE) of the Five Dynasties period,<sup>839</sup> listed

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<sup>837</sup> Guo Yintang and Li Peilin 2003, 6.

<sup>838</sup> The contents of P. 3931 are divided into four sections. Section (b) was the part relevant to the present discussion. Other section of the same scroll were explicitly dated to Tianfu 天福 3 (938 CE) and Tianfu 4 (939 CE) of the Later Tang dynasty.

<sup>839</sup> Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 2000, 122

the “Bamboo Grove Monastery” as one of the “Renowned Monastery of the Northern Mount Wutai (北五臺名寺)” along with the Avatamsaka Monastery 華嚴寺 and the Golden Pavilion Monastery 金閣寺. As a final piece of evidence, when Jōjin was roaming in the Mount Wutai area in Xining 熙寧5 (1072 CE) during the Northern Song dynasty, he also did not record hearing about two monasteries named as “Bamboo Grove”. Based on the textual records above, we can conclude that the “Bamboo Grove Monastery” located near the Central Terrace was originally established by Fazhao and remained active through the Tang, Five Dynasties and Northern Song periods. In contrast, the “Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery” located close to Foguangsi in the Southern Terrace region was not built until after the Northern Song. Nevertheless, given the similarities of their names, it seems these two monasteries may have had some connections historically, but previous publications do not offer any ready answers. If the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery was not established by Fazhao, who founded it, when, and why?

As I mentioned previously, the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery did not receive much scholarly attention until recently, when investigations were carried out following the discovery of several pieces of marble sculpture by local villagers at the site in 2003.<sup>840</sup> Previously, only two stela from the Ming and Qing period were still standing on the ruins, and neither offers much credible information about the history of its monastic history. A six-sided brick pagoda nearby had been reported, which was finally cleared out from its

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<sup>840</sup> Guo Yintang and Li Peilin 2003, 3-6. The Cultural Relics Investigation Team of the Yanbei Region visited the site in 1950 CE. Nevertheless, no mention of it was made in their published report. The site has thus escaped previous scholarly attention.

half-buried status during the investigation.<sup>841</sup> It offered important clues regarding the establishment and later history of the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery.

The pagoda is six-sided and built with brick. (Figure 70) Its three sides were embedded with inscribed stone tablets. Two inscriptions, one engraved with a memorial epigraph and one with the *Sūtra of the Buddha's Supreme Uṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī*, are preserved in legible condition, both bearing the date of Huangtong 皇統 5 (1145 CE) of the Jin dynasty. The third one, positioned above a niche with Buddhist statues, may have been the primary name plaque. However, it has corroded beyond recognition. The memorial epigraph is the most important text that I discuss extensively below. It identified this structure as a communal funerary pagoda, primarily commemorating the late Master Song 嵩公, while also serving his disciples Yongzheng 永正, Yongzhen 永眞, and Yongcheng 永誠.<sup>842</sup> One notable passage reads:

The community all valued and venerated him. [Yongzheng] then took up the position of the Great Virtue who Oversees the [Ordination] Platform. The community [also] endorsed in his appointment as the Head of the Buddha Hall Precinct. [When this official duty] was also completed, [Yongzheng] stepped back [into retirement]. However, [he] contemplated on monk Fazhao [encountering] the conjured Bamboo Grove Monastery in ancient times [*text lost*]. [Albeit] all the years and months [that have passed by], the ink inscriptions [Fazhao left on site] remained as if newly [written]. Isn't this itself a miraculous and strange phenomena? If not advocated, how could [it] be venerated by later generations? Therefore, [Yongzheng] donated

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<sup>841</sup> Based on stylistic analysis of the half-buried pagoda at the time when the marble sculptures were reported, Guo and Li have correctly suggested it resembles the pagoda of the Venerable Xiao near Foguangsi, dated to Taihe 5 (1205 CE), which I discuss later, and may be from Jin dynasty (Guo Yintang and Li Peilin 2003, 6).

<sup>842</sup> The three Yong-generation monks were still alive at the time of the pagoda's construction, but were reserving the place as their own burials as well, which concerns the practice of "preemptive cultivations [of luck] (預修)" I discuss in the next section.

money from [his] pocket to build a monastery [*text lost*]. Statues [and the like] were all prepared, making what Fazhao had spiritually encountered clearly displayed in front of people's eyes and [heard by their] ears. This is certainly not just a minor contribution!

眾鹹推伏之。遂充臨壇大德，眾詣充佛殿院主。亦畢。退居。又念昔日法照和尚化竹林寺其歲月至今。墨蹟如新。此亦神異之事焉。不有發揚。後人何仰。遂捨囊資建寺像莫不畢具。使法照遇靈顯昭然在人耳目。豈小補哉。

From above, it is clear from the inscription that Yongzheng, who was previously in charge of the nearby Foguangsi, was the founder of the “Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery”.

During the Jin Dynasty, the stone inscription left by Fazhao was still in place, which served as major inspiration for Yongzheng, who sought to “build a monastery (建寺)” that manifested Fazhao's miraculous experience of the conjured monastery.<sup>843</sup>

It explains the absence of any record concerning the site from the Tang, Five Dynasties and the Northern Song periods. Its epigraph also explains the materialistic and stylistic similarities between the marble sculptures found near the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery<sup>844</sup> and the sculptures excavated from the ruins of the Great Pagoda of the Pure Immaculate Light at the Foguangsi.<sup>845</sup> Yongzheng probably transferred some statues from the Foguangsi repository to make sure this newly built monastery was “fully equipped (莫

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<sup>843</sup> Nevertheless, the history of establishment of Yongzheng's “Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery” was eventually lost. On the aforementioned Ming dynasty stele found on site, inscriptions maintained the “Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery” was the original one built by Fazhao, who must have “built [the conjured monastery] exactly where he envisioned it (於見處建)”.

<sup>844</sup> These newly found sculptures were now housed in the Shanxi Provincial Museum.

<sup>845</sup> For example, the elongated oval-shaped lotus pedestals that used the “jeweled petals” design is almost identical to the pedestal of the marble Śākyamuni Buddha. Note that the marble sculpture which depicted the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on his lion mount was labeled as “collected from the Foguangsi”, however, it was in fact said to come from the ruins of the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery as well.

不畢具)”。

Another important clue provided by the pagoda inscription concerns the Great Pavilion of Maitreya of Foguangsi. According to the inscription, Yongcheng, a fellow monk of the “*yong* (永)” generation who studied with Master Song, was the major commissioner of the pagoda. Yongcheng was also purported to have brought forth the revival of the Foguangsi, and the section of the epigraph on him is quoted and translated *in extenso*:

Yongcheng, whose secular surname is Hao, is a native of the [Wutai] county, who comes from the Tangming. [His] father’s name is Qi, and [his] mother is Madam Tian. In Daguan 3 (1109 CE), blessed with excellent *karma*, [Yongcheng] attained salvation (i.e., received initial ordination) on the Tianming Festival [that celebrates the emperor’s birthday]. [He] received complete [ordination] at the age of eighteen. [He] initially listened to [teachings on] the [*Lucid Introduction to the*] *One Hundred Dharmas* lectured by monk Xiesheng in Jiading, and later found refuge with the Elder of [Ordination] Platform, Great Abhidharma Master Zhibian at Mount [Wutai], and studied the *Nyayappravewa* of the Hetuvidyā Tradition. [He] was able to find the exquisite charms in both [texts].

永誠。俗姓郝。當縣唐明裡人也。父諱琦。母田氏。大觀三年天寧節。以業優得度。十八受具。初於嘉定齋盛和尚聽百法[明門]論。後依本山壇長智辯大論師而習因明入正理論。各得其趣。

Reaching the Xuanhe [era] (1119-1125 CE), [Yongcheng] was appointed the [*text lost*] of the Buddha Hall, and oversaw [monastic] constructions. [The emperor] promoted [him] and bestowed [him] the Purple Kāśāya. In Tianhui 10 (1132 CE), [he] frequently pondered the multiple precincts of this monastery and the dispersed residences for monks, [which resulted in] the failure [of them] to unite in a concerted effort. [*text lost*] all the precincts were under accumulated stress, and [*text lost*] were only provided with \$4,000,000 cash all together. It can truly be said that united communities are indestructible and isolated ones are easily shattered. [Yongcheng] then rallied the filial youths and propagated this benefit [of being united]. The monastic community delightedly followed his teachings. [They] therefore moved to reside in the same place and commuted [to their precincts]. [*text lost*] [Yongcheng] was appointed the vice head of the monastery, managed [*text lost*], and

whole-heartedly devoted to monastic affairs and worked diligently.

至宣和□□充佛殿□□管勾當。改賜紫衣。天會十年。每念當寺數院僧各異居。不能戮力同心。□□積壓眾院僅共四千貫□。誠可謂孤則易析。眾則難摧也。遂勉諸孝幼陳斯利。臺□院僧眾忻然從教遂通一常住眾□□充副寺。□勾當自□寺事懃心苦力動止。

Extraordinarily, the Master [Yongcheng] was not in favor of severity nor did [he] impose any cruelty. Still, the public would willingly [text lost]. Word spread among the monastic community, saying that “the Master [Yong]cheng displayed generosity in interactions and frugality in [text lost] consumptions. Thanks to [him], our generation could easily dress warmly and eat our fill. If [we] did not exhaust [our] strength in return, [we] are [no different from] straw-made dogs.” [They] told [Yuancheng], “We wish to collect alms and make up what is lacking in the monastic provisions.”

唯公不尚威嚴。不施苛暴。而院門已□。寺眾相謂曰：誠公處事寬和。用□儉約。使我輩安然溫飽。若不宣力報之是為菟狗也。相與告之曰：某等願為化主以補院餉之不足。

Thereupon, everyone rendered service from annual incomes, which must have exceeded \$10,000,000 cash. Subsequently, meals at the repository were plentiful, and the treasury [text lost]. The three precincts also [paid off] debts without any leftover [dues]. The community praised [Yongcheng] saying, “Since Emperor Wen founded the monastery, [it] has never been as thriving as it is today! [This is] all Master [Yong]cheng’s achievement.” A Great Dharma Hall, a two-storied pavilion, a three-bay gateway, repositories and storages, as well as covered arcades, were all fully equipped at the place of the Constant Abiding. The nature of [Yongcheng] was naturally compassionate and wise, [his] knowledge illuminating and calculations efficient. The great deeds achieved by [text lost], were they not [text lost]...

由是人々效力每歲所入。不啻萬緡。既而堂食豐饒。帑藏□□。三院□債。靡有孑遺。眾譽之曰：自文帝建寺已來。無如今日之勝。皆誠公之功也。於常住位建大法堂。重閣。三門。廚庫。廊廡。悉皆完備。□之性自仁賢。識量明敏。所幹□□大事。豈不□焉。

In the second winter month (i.e., the eleventh month) of Huangtong 5 (1145 CE), [Yongcheng] sought for his own retirement. The assembly Buddhist officials and [his] disciple all insisted on keeping [text lost]. However, [they] could not change [his] mind. [Yongcheng] gave a sweeping jerk with [his] sleeves and returned to [his] dorm [text lost]. Buddhist officials have relied on [him] as the right-hand assistant. The Ten Monasteries [of Mount Wutai] have regarded [him] as a teacher and a model. Visitors to the monastery have [treated him] as [their] parents... [text lost] a

great figure of the Dharma. Upon completing the renovation project of the Great Pavilion of Maitreya, [Yong]cheng and others remembered that the late master was yet to be buried. [Yongcheng himself] has also reached a senior age. [text lost] A location was chosen to erect the funerary pagoda, [text lost] decorated with statues and niches, as the resting place for their earthly bodies.

皇統五年仲冬。自求解退。僧官徒眾□意堅留。亦不可奪其志。拂袖歸房□□□□僧官倚之若肱股。□寺遵之如師範。寺客□之如父母。□□道之偉人也。邇後裝鑾彌勒大閣畢功。誠等念先師未葬。□已耆年 [...] 擇塔處□□柩像設□龕。各為身役之所處。

The intention was to [text lost]. I composed the epigraph for the pagoda. I remembered that the Master Śākyamuni resided in mountains and hid his whereabouts in order to pursue the Dharma. [text lost] humans and *milu*-deers [text lost]... the Dharma to deliver [from worldly miseries]. [Given] the difficulties to regulate the [course of] heaven, and the righteousness of the wishes that put forth, there will not be any regrets even when faced with the teacher. Therefore, [I] wrote in a straightforward manner and use it as the epigraph for the pagoda, [text lost].

意圖□□得奉於師 [...] 與吾 [...] 予為之塔記。予念釋子處於□居山隱跡。以為其務道□□人與麋鹿 [...] 道以濟。役天之艱難及誠正之祈事。於師亦何愧哉。故直書之以為塔記 [...]

It is clear that after his retirement in Huangtong 5 (1145 CE), Yongcheng also oversaw the renovation of the Great Pavilion of Maitreya in addition to building a Great Dharma Hall 大法堂 and other structures. These projects were completed shortly before the construction of the funerary pagoda. The epigraph bearing the *Sūtra of the Buddha's Supreme Uṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī* found on the same structure was dated to Huangtong 5 (1145 CE), the same year of Yongcheng's retirement, thus the pagoda must be established shortly afterwards, if not in the same year. In other words, the Pavilion must also be standing around this time.

As stated above, Fu Xi'nian's reconstruction placed the Great Pavilion of Maitreya on the second terraced ground, along the east and west axis of the building complex. Given the grand scale of pavilion structure and the now cramped space left on the second terrace,



it would overlap with the space occupied by the Mañjuśrī Hall that is standing today. That is, the reconstruction assumes that the pavilion structure was already destroyed before the establishment of the Mañjuśrī Hall. From the renovation inscription found at the Mañjuśrī Hall, however, we are informed this structure was already standing by Tianhui 天會 15 (1137 CE), in which year it was “restored (重修)”. Coupled with the information retrieved from the pagoda inscription I discussed earlier, the Great Pavilion of Maitreya and the Mañjuśrī Hall must have had co-existed in the mid-12th century, if not earlier. As a result, Fu’s theory is rendered impossible to stand, and an alternative reconstruction is in order. When did the lost pavilion formerly stand?

The open ground located behind the Mañjuśrī Hall deserves special attention. Now deserted and converted into farmland and storage space, it would have been an ideal location for the Great Pavilion of Maitreya. Indeed, there are abundant clues that indicate some structures must have once stood at this place.<sup>846</sup> Without archaeological investigations being carried out at Foguangsi, it is too early to draw any conclusions. However, if this alternative reconstruction could be confirmed, it would imply drastic changes of the monastic layout of Foguangsi in its early history.<sup>847</sup> Among many other

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<sup>846</sup> The most notable being the rear entrance of the Mañjuśrī Hall, which seemed unexplainable based on the current monastery layout. One would step out this back door and found oneself faced with the rock face of a higher terrace planted with corns. Nevertheless, if the Great Pavilion of Maitreya was located behind the hall, having such a rear entrance would seem convenient and necessity. Stairs and paths outside this back door would be leading up to the pavilion, connecting them together.

<sup>847</sup> There is only one other possibility that reconstructs the lost Great Pavilion Maitreya as “a terraced architecture built to comply with the mountainous terrain (依山势而修的叠坎建筑)”. (Chai Zejun 2011, 3-5)

things, this reconstruction would overturn our previous understanding of the general orientation of the Foguangsi monastic complex.<sup>848</sup> Based on textual evidence, it seems that a Tang precedent for the current Mañjuśrī Hall was already established in the eighth century.<sup>849</sup> The Great Pavilion of Maitreya was added by Faxing in the early ninth century. With the Mañjuśrī Hall as its principle icon hall, and a newly built pavilion for Maitreya set in front of the northern cliff, both facing south, the alternative reconstruction suggests a layout that observed the conventional orientation for most Chinese Buddhist monasteries. Close examinations of above-ground evidence surrounding the Foguangsi architectural complex further supports such a possibility.<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>848</sup> The Foguangsi architectural compound has always been regarded as having an east-west main axis, with its main entrance facing the west, in contrast to the conventional north-south axis adopted by almost all Chinese Buddhist monasteries. Previous scholarship did not offer much explanation for such a choice of orientation. The only argument was based on the formation of its mountainous setting, suggesting that the axis must have been turned east-west to better adjust to the surrounding landscape. Nevertheless, such an argument hardly stands, because the monastery was in fact enclosed by cliffs from both the east and north sides, and a north-south axis with south-facing entrance could also be easily accommodated by the surrounding landscape.

<sup>849</sup> Although the present-day structure of the hall was believed to exhibit post-Song dynasty architectural traits, it was not clear when a building was first established on the location. A Qing dynasty stele preserved at Foguangsi, dated to Kangxi 康熙 16 (1721 CE) and entitled “Stele Inscription on the Completion of the Restoration of the Mañjuśrī Hall 重修文殊殿落成碑記”, offers an important piece of information: “The Mañjuśrī Hall at Foguang is expansive and glanderingous, being the most prominent in rank compared to other monasteries of the [Five] Terrace Mountains. It is not clear when was [this hall] founded. Only [traces left were] the inscriptions on plaques mounted to the beams, one recorded a renovation during the Kaiyuan era (713-741 CE), one recorded a renovation during the Hongzhi era (1488-1505 CE). Thus [the hall] had long been [accommodating the] the spread and transmission of Dharma. 佛光寺之文殊殿。廣袤雄傑。甲於臺山諸刹。不知創始何代。唯梁工板一記開元重修。一記弘治重修。是其廣布弘化。燈傳薪法者。其來久已。” The stele claims that a “beam plaque (梁工板)” was still preserved at the time of the restoration during the Qing dynasty, tracing the establishment of the Mañjuśrī Hall to the Kaiyuan era of the Tang. It is quite possible, since given the status of Mañjuśrī as the principle deity of the Mount Wutai, a hall devoted to him would be an essential structure for the Foguangsi. However, the descriptions in the inscription seem too specific to be fabricated, and if taken as a fact, it would point to the established of the hall to no later than the Tang dynasty.

<sup>850</sup> For instance, the present-day southern courtyard, with a small garden in front of a section of outer wall,

Another important takeaway from the biographical sketches of the four monks in the pagoda inscription from the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery is the continuity of monastic communities and their activities at the Foguangsi during the transitional period of the late Northern Song and Jin period. It is intriguing that the monastic community was not affected by the ongoing warfare and overall political climate in north China, which was in a state of anarchy with neither the Song nor the Jin completely able to assert power. After a brief low point, monks including Yongcheng were able to rebuild the monastic community as well as its architecture. In addition to the construction and restoration projects mentioned above, such as the renovations of the Mañjuśrī Hall and the Great Pavilion of Maitreya, and the establishment of the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery and a funerary pagoda, there are other evidence that points to an increase in building activities on the site during the Northern Song and Jin transitional period. Within the vicinity of Foguangsi, for example, one funerary pagoda dated to Taihe 5 (1205 CE) of the Jin dynasty by inscription<sup>851</sup> and two more that can be stylistically dated to this time are still extant.

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would accommodate a southward entrance quite well. A path to the mountain slop where several pagodas still stand also started from the southern side of the monastery. It is common for a mountain monastery to build its ascending path without restraints of orientation, but other monasteries at Wutaishan have oriented its main axis towards south without exception. The Foguangsi may have been a rule after all, instead of an exception. On the other hand, the screen wall and the gate pavilion that marked the current west entrance were all clearly Ming and Qing period additions. Liang Ssu-ch'eng took note of a peculiar “Airless Tower (悶樓)” introduced to him, which was probably his misunderstanding of the homophone “Gate Tower (門樓)”. Nevertheless, the tower probably functioned as one of the bell and drum towers that marked the entrance to many other Ming and Qing rebuilt monasteries at Mount Wutai, another clue that the current entrance may have went under much reform during the Ming and Qing period.

<sup>851</sup> The pagoda was dedicated to the “Preceptor of Dharma Characteristics 唯識戒師和尚”, the Venerable Xiao 杲公.

The Song-Jin revival also left its mark on the Main Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi. A case in point is the historical information that was conveyed by the inscribed plaques, which were placed under the two-rafter beams and inner architraves. A total of nine plaques are recorded.<sup>852</sup> Among these plaques, the one located under the two-rafter crescent beam north of the central front bay deserves our close attention. It is hardly mentioned in previous scholarship,<sup>853</sup> since the darkened paint and the faded inscriptions have made it very hard to read. During my field investigations with the Tianjin University team, we were able to inspect the plaque and identify its date as Tiande 3 (1151 CE) of the Jin dynasty.<sup>854</sup> Based on the layering of paint surrounding this plaque, it seems that the Buddha Hall was thoroughly repainted around this period. The identification of a Jin dynasty date is significant as it corresponds with a Ming period stele inscription, which claimed “[the Foguangsi] was founded during the Great Tang and renovated under the Great Jin”. The prominent positioning of the plaque in the central bay signals its importance. In the following section, I move onward to discuss another major renovation

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<sup>852</sup> The ones that are already dated with certainty include three belonging to the Ming dynasty and one to the Qing dynasty. Other than the Jin dynasty plaque I discuss below, the other five plaques are badly preserved and their inscriptions are almost illegible.

<sup>853</sup> During the survey undertaken by Qi Yingtao and Li Zhujun, this inscription was transcribed as “維大金興定伍年辛巳…… (1221 CE)”, being the only other known record of the plaque (Tianjin Daxue Jianzhu Xueyuan et al. 2015a, 6).

<sup>854</sup> The inscription begins with: “It is year of Tian[?] 3 under the Empire of the Great Jin 維大金國天□三年”. Although behind “*tian* 天”, the sixth character is difficult to identify, we can be certain that both were used to designate reign names. Since there are only four reign names during the Jin dynasty that start with “*tian* 天”, namely Tianfu 天輔, Tianhui 天會, Tianjuan 天眷 and Tiande 天德, by identifying the “彳” and “心” radicals of this otherwise unrecognizable character, we were able to conclude the reign name as bore on the plaque must be “Tiande 天德”. To our regret, however, the characters following the date were not identified.

that took place at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi.

### **THE MING-QING RESTORATION OF FOGUANGSI**

Based on results of the C-14 dating results and analyses of epigraphic and textual sources, I have demonstrated that the initial establishment of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi can be dated to the mid-seventh century, and an expansive restoration project was carried out in the mid-eighth century. In the post-Tang period, similar to the repairs, alterations and additions that underwent in the monastic complex, the Buddha Hall itself continued to be subjected to major changes. One such notable alteration involves a different positioning of its front walls and gates that merged its open portico into its interior space, which I discussed in Chapter 4. I have introduced the historiography and detailed the architectural evidence, and in the following section, I examine the spatial-functional changes of the Buddha Hall occurred in compliance with these structural alternations, in order to offer some insights into the possible circumstances behind this major renovation at Foguangsi.

In order to address these issues, it is first necessary to take a look at when this alternation took place. Chai Zejun has offered an important clue. He astutely noted that one of the cross rails on the back of the Buddha Hall's door panels was fixed on top of an ink inscription that dated to Yongle 5 (1407 CE).<sup>855</sup> Despite the plank door themselves being originals dating to the Tang dynasty, this detail suggests that they must have undergone

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<sup>855</sup> Chai Zejun 1982, 83-89.

repair after this date. C-14 dating undertaken by the Tianjin University team has since proved that the cross rails are indeed from a later period, dated to the Ming dynasty, which reinforced Chai's observation. An inscription dated to Xuande 9 (1434 CE), written on the south panel of the door installed at the central bay, offers further insights. It reads:

Starting from the fourth month of Xuande 9 (1434 CE), the Great Buddha Hall was under restoration. The Dhyāna Master [*text lost*], fellow disciples Guangmin, Yuanxing, Zhenshan, and others [...]

Donors Wang Puhai and Jiang Miaoqian were in charge of the gloss finish of the doors. On the twenty-seventh day, in the seventh month of this year, the work was completed.

Respectfully recorded by the assisting *śrāmaṇera*, Zhengning

宣德九年四月為始。重修大佛殿。禪師□□。徒眾廣明。遠興真山等。

管油門施主王普海。姜妙賢。

本年七月二十七日工畢。

助緣沙彌正寧拜記。

The date of the inscription matched that of another restoration inscription, written on a plaque and installed under the north two-rafter crescent beam located on the north second bay of the front aisle:

At this time of the Xuande era of the Great Ming [dynasty], in the year of *jiayin*,<sup>856</sup> the month of *yize* [*text lost*], [we] restored the Treasure Hall of the Great Hero (i.e. the Great Buddha Hall) etc., humbly wishing:

The [favorable] wind of the Emperor will blow forever, attracting all the [foreign] countries coming to pay tributes; the sun of the Buddha will emit lasting light, allowing all the ten directions to be pervasively [lit].

Secondly, [we wish that]:

Both the status and salary of the supporting officials will receive extraordinary promotions; both the fortune and health of the sponsoring patrons will be

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<sup>856</sup> The date on the plaque inscription was given as the “*jiayin* 甲寅 year” of sexagenarian cycle during the Xuande era, which converts to be Xuande 9 (1434 CE).

abundant and lasting.

Admonitioner, Liu Zhen; [text lost] Wang Qi; Gentleman for Managing Affairs and District Magistrate of Wutai, Dong [text lost]; [text lost] Li Cheng; [text lost] Secretary, Hai Dachuan; Mountain-residing [Monk] of this monastery, Suibaoyan; Head Monk, Mingyuetang

皆大明宣德。歲次甲寅。月律夷則。拾有九□。重葺大雄寶殿等。祝願

皇風永扇令諸國以來朝

佛日延輝使十方而普遍

次及

助緣宰輔官位祿位兩高迁

捨力檀那福宮命宮俱錦遠

訓道劉貞。□□典史張玘。五臺承事郎知縣董□。□司舍人李誠。□□□無盡  
掌書海大川。本寺住山隨寶岩。首座明月堂

These two pieces of inscriptions suggest that the reparation of the doors in Xuande 9 (1434 CE) must have been a part of a larger renovation program ongoing with the Buddha Hall.<sup>857</sup>

Sui Baoyan 隨寶岩, the “Mountain-residing Monk” of Foguangsi who oversaw this renovation project, is also referred to as Bensui 本隨 (var. 本隋) or by his style-name Zhao’an 照庵, and was repeatedly referenced in contemporary epigraphic materials found at the Foguangsi. A stele placed outside the Buddha Hall, entitled “Stele of the Restoration of the Foguangsi and the Renovation of Arhat [Statues] 重修佛光寺補塑羅漢之碑” and dated to Zhengtong 正統 3 (1438 CE), bears the most detailed record:

During the Xuande era, there came the patriarch whose name is Bensui, style name Zhao’an, a native of Ji prefecture in Shandong<sup>858</sup>, and [a member of] a prestigious

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<sup>857</sup> Note that all the other inscriptions on the plank doors are notes by travelling monks, nuns, or officials, and usually written at marginal places on the door. This is the only restoration inscription, located at the prominent position of the central bay, and its content concerns the doors themselves. Its unique nature and significant location both point to its importance.

<sup>858</sup> The “Shandong 山東” as one of the “Province Administration Commissions 布政使司” administrations established during the Ming dynasty should not to be confused with the current day Shandong province. The

clan. Holding a cane, [Bensui] traveled to Wutai and stumbled on the Foguang[si]. [He] admired the majestic halls and multistoried pavilions, the grandeur of the holy statues. [However,] it was all empty up and down between the red walls of the great hall. [Bensui] was fond of [the place] and therefore stayed. [He commissioned] three thousand panels of murals, and each decorated with ten thousand Bodhisattvas. [He also patronized] five hundred arhats molded in clay and painted in color, a magnificent bell and a gigantic drum. Our monastery, therefore, greatly prospered.

後至宣德年間。有祖師上本下隨。雅號照庵。乃山東薊州玉田之望族。策杖來遊五台。至此佛光。睹斯廣殿重閣。聖像崑崙。大殿赤壁之間。上下皆空。喜而雖止。壁畫三千幅諸佛。一萬菩薩。塑彩五百羅漢。宏鐘大鼓。叢林之大興也。

The “rediscovery” of the Foguangsi by monk Bensui during the Ming dynasty reflects yet another revival of Mount Wutai.

In the early fifteenth century, Tibetan Buddhism was at its apex there and Mount Wutai. Imperial Chinese patronage is especially notable here under the reign of Emperor Yongle 永樂 (r. 1403-1424 CE), as seen in the renovation and expansion of several major monasteries, including the Great Clear Understanding Monastery.<sup>859</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of the building activities centered around the Taihuai area,<sup>860</sup> and prominent monasteries from earlier periods that were located further away from the center did not seem to attract much attention from the court. Another example is the “rediscovery” and reconstruction of the Jin’gesi, which conveys a story almost identical to that of the Foguangsi. According to two Ming dynasty stela that are still preserved *in situ*,<sup>861</sup> the old

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former had a larger geographic scope than the latter, which included parts of current day Hebei province.

<sup>859</sup> Karl Debreczeny 2011, 24-25.

<sup>860</sup> Lin Wei-cheng 2014.

<sup>861</sup> “Epigraph on the Meritorious Deeds of Zhang from the Dai Municipality of Yunzhong [i.e. Datong] who Served A Vegetarian Feast to Monks 雲中代府張氏齋僧積善行實碑記”, dated to Jiajing 36 (1557 CE), and



Jin’gesi established during the Tang dynasty had suffered much from warfare, only with its “ancient site (遺跡)” left behind.<sup>862</sup> Since then, another monk from Yanfasi 衍法寺 traveled to Wutai in Jiajing 1 (1522 CE) and reached its “ruins (丘墟)” in Jiajing 4 (1525 CE). He on the responsibility of revitalizing the once prominent Monastery of the Golden Pavilion. However, note that quite unlike Bensui who saw the unoccupied, ill-maintained, but still “majestic” buildings of Foguangsi, this anonymous monk lamented that the “the monastery was destroyed of any traces (緇廬毀跡)”. In addition to raising funds, he also “sought the original designs [of the monastery] (訪故形)”.<sup>863</sup> The rebuilt Jin’gesi as we see today very much resemble the overall layout of the late Tang period Foguangsi, both were situated at the foot of a mountain range, and arranged its buildings on a three-level terraced ground.<sup>864</sup> (Figures 71 & 72)

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“Epigraph on the Meritorious Deeds of Rebuilding the Jin’gesi of Mount Wutai and the Making and Erecting of the Gilt Five-Zhang-and-Three-Chi Great Buddha 五臺山重建金閣寺造立大佛五丈三尺金身行實碑記”, dated to Jiajing 37 (1558 CE). For transcription, see Bei Ming 1997, 39-41; the latter was also published in Zhou Zhenhua et al. 1998, 110-112.

<sup>862</sup> The inscriptions at Jin’gesi corresponded with Ming dynasty travelogues. A Ming court official Qiao Yu 喬宇 (1457-1524 CE), who travelled in Wutaishan in Zhengde 正德 1 (1506 CE), recorded the monastery as “already abolished (已廢)”. Note that another Ming dynasty traveler, Wang Siren 王思任 (1574-1646 CE), who visited the rebuilt Jin’gesi in Wanli 萬曆 38 (1610 CE), a century after the monk from Yanfasi reached there, testified to the revival of Jin’gesi. However, Wang also denoted the lavish establishments, including the giant statue, and observed that the monastery as “no longer sustainable (不支)”. These two abovementioned travelogues are reprinted in Cui Zhengsen annot. 1989, 1-2 and 5-9.

<sup>863</sup> Among the newly rebuilt structures from the Ming revival was a pavilion hall of “three stories and seven eave columns (三層七楹)”, that is, with five bays. During Jiajing 23-34 (1544-1555 CE), a gilt bronze statue was made to be housed in the pavilion.

<sup>864</sup> At the Ming dynasty period rebuilt Jin’gesi, a steep staircase, whose starting point is marked by a gateway, leads the visitors to the first level of its complex, which is only a narrow strip of space in front of its main gate. Behind the main gate is the second level, followed by the main structure on the central axis, the seven-by-four bay Pavilion of Great Compassion 大悲閣. It was allegedly erected on the ruins of the iconic Tang dynasty Golden Pavilion built under Amoghavajra. The third level is where the Buddha hall, in this case called the Treasure Hall of the Great Hero 大雄寶殿, is located. The second flight of stairs leading to this

Returning to our discussion of the Foguangsi, it appears that doors' reparation be concurrent with their changing of locations, and took place during the renovation of the Buddha Hall initiated by Bensui after his arrival in Xuande 4 (1429 CE) of the Ming dynasty.<sup>865</sup> Based on the aforementioned inscription found on the plank door and the inscribed plaque under a two-rafter beam, both dated to Xuande 9 (1434 CE), we are informed that repairing of the Buddha Hall lasted for at least five years. However, question remains as to why would Bensui and his fellow monks decide to make such a major change to the Buddha Hall? The "five hundred arhats" added by Bensui, housed inside the hall, offer an important clue.<sup>866</sup> These arhat statues are smaller than life-size, arranged on a three-leveled brick platform placed along the north, south and east walls of the Buddha Hall. (Figure 73) Given the position of the brick platform occupied the length of the entire four bays of the north and south aisles, this arrangement could not have been possible when the hall had an open portico. It appears that the converting of the portico structure into a closed front aisle must have taken place contemporaneously or sometime before the

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uppermost level also has cave houses constructed on both sides. Here, however, these cave houses are arranged along two stories, each appended with a portico, and a tile roof on top had put them in disguise as a traditional timber structure. It should be noted that a new structure is currently under construction on the recently cleaned-out fourth level of complex.

<sup>865</sup> The "Stele of the Restoration of the Foguangsi and the Renovation of Arhat [Statues]" quoted above did not specify the exact year in which Bensui arrived at the Foguangsi, only suggesting it was during the Xuande era. However, two other inscriptions, found an iron bell cast in Xuande 5 (1430 CE) and a memorial stele dated to Tianshun 天順 2 (1458 CE) respectively, have provided this missing information. The bell inscription referred to Bensui's arrival at the Foguangsi as in the "*siyou* 己酉 year [of sexagenarian cycle] during the Xuande era", which converts to Xuande 4 (1429 CE). The stele that details the virtuous deeds of Bensui also identified the year of to Xuande 4 (1429 CE).

<sup>866</sup> The arhat sculptures at the Buddha Hall are referred generically to as the "five hundred arhats", whose extant number actually amounts to about three hundred in total. All three inscriptions mention in the previous note referenced the installment of these arhat sculptures by Bensui.

addition of the arhat statues, and the alternation most likely took place to accommodate their installation.

It is worth noting that although the images of arhats started to appear in Buddhist art as early as the eighth century, they mainly existed in paintings and appeared in groups of sixteen, based on a canonical source, *A Record of the Perpetuity of the Dharma* 大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記, translated by Xuanzang in Yonghui 永徽 5 (654 CE).<sup>867</sup> Records of the “five hundred arhats” combination did not emerge until in some Song period treatises, which was perhaps born out of local legends about the Stone Bridge Monastery 石梁寺 of the Mount Tiantai 天臺山.<sup>868</sup> When the Japanese monk Jōjin was travelling in China, the cult of arhats had been receiving patronage from the Song imperial court as well as local officials. In the monasteries he visited at Mount Tiantai in Xining 熙寧 5 (1072 CE), there placed imperial sponsored “Arhat Halls (羅漢堂)” as the principle architecture in the monastic complex, where statues of “five hundred arhats” were held.<sup>869</sup> During Jōjin’s subsequent journey to the capital city Bianjing 汴京 and all the way north to the Wutai Mountains, Arhat Halls repeatedly appeared in his records. To date, the Arhat Hall at Shuanglinsi 雙林寺 preserved rare examples of arhat sculptures, perhaps dating to the Jin or even Song period.

In addition to the arhat sculptures, Bensui also decorated with the Buddha Hall “overhanging sculptures (懸塑)” made with wooden armatures and clay, which depicted

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<sup>867</sup> T49n2030; for an English translation see Jen-lang 2002.

<sup>868</sup> Joo Bong Seok 2007, 187-230.

<sup>869</sup> Wang Liping annot. 2009.

green and blue mountainous landscape, dotted with pieces of red clouds. (Figure 74) The sculptures were expansive in scale, arranged on the north, south, and east sides of the hall, and the two end bays at the front, corresponding to the position of the arhats. They were fitted onto the walls and bracket-sets with tips of the sculpture touching upon the lattice ceilings. At places where intrabacket-set panels behind the sculptures were exposed, the original murals on the panel surfaces were painted over with green and blue colors to blend in with the settings. Such monumental overhanging sculptures are quite popular in the monasteries the in Taihuai 台懷 area of Mount Wutai renovated in the Ming and Qing period.<sup>870</sup> They often employed the mountain landscape as a standard setting for the trope of “five hundred arhats”. At the Shuxiangsi, in particular, a stele inscription dated to Hongzhi 弘治 9 (1496 CE) indicated that its sculptures were made roughly contemporarily with that of the Foguangsi.

The immense popularity of arhat cult since the Song dynasty, together with the overhanging sculptures of mountainous landscape at Wutai during the Ming period, and the need to create a space for them at the Buddha Hall during Bensui’s renovation project, may explain the relocation of the front doors, and the conversion of the front portico into a front aisle. We even may be able to trace the practice of constructing overhanging sculptures to the current-day Hedong and Hebei region, since the Shuxiangsi inscription particularly identified their “sculptural artisans (塑匠)” as coming from current-day Baoding 保定,

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<sup>870</sup> Extant examples include the Shuxiangsi 殊像寺, Yuanzhaosi 圓照寺, the rebuilt Jin’gesi, and so forth. See Chen Jie 2008, 42-45.

Hebei province.<sup>871</sup> Long connected by the ancient “Flying Fox Pass”, the networks between the current day Hebei area, situated east of the Taihang Mountain Range, and that of the Wutai area were revitalized during the peace and unification of the Ming period. It is not surprising then, that Ji county, where Bensui originated, was also within current-day Hebei province.

Hebei is home to a dozen extant ancient temples, including Longxingsi 隆兴寺 at Zhengding 正定, whose extant structures mostly date to the Northern Song dynasty. At its Śākyamuni Hall, a monumental overhanging sculpture panel installed at the back of the altar, facing north, featured the statue of a Bodhisattva in the kind of grotto setting similar to the aforementioned overhanging sculpture tradition at the Wutai area. (Figure 75)

According to the “Record of the Re-sculpture of the Sacred Avalokiteśvara 重塑背坐觀音聖像記”, the sculpture was restored in Jiajing 嘉靖 42 (1563 CE), but the initial installation was arguably earlier. Mount Pan, where Bensui spent his earlier years as a monk, was also the house to an ancient monastery Dulesi 獨樂寺. A bodhisattva statue installed at the back of the altar in the Bodhisattva Pavilion is of the same kind.<sup>872</sup> (Figure 76)

With the Ming dynasty revival at Mount Wutai and the subsequent influx of monastic population from the east side of the Taihang Mountains, it seems that the aesthetics as well as techniques of overhanging sculptures, which was harnessed in setting the landscape for arhat sculptures, were transmitted to the Wutai area as well.

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<sup>871</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>872</sup> For further discussions of the Bodhisattva sculpture at the Dulesi, see Marilyn L. Gridley 1993, 93-110.

## TOWARD A CULTURAL BIOGRAPHY OF CHINESE MONASTERIES

In foregoing discussions, I have discussed the numerous layers of construction accumulated at Foguangsi and reflected, for example, in its the mysteries surrounding the Great Pavilion of Maitreya and the changing space of the Great Buddha Hall. These observations demonstrate the relative flexibility of buildings constructed in timber frames. Most extant historical timber-framed architecture have more or less been modified on its existing timber frames. A fully timber-framed building, by definition, only uses wooden columns and beams to form its structural “skeleton”, and does not employ any load-bearing walls. As a result, the structure is separated from its “skins and flesh”, so to speak, meaning the exterior enclosures, interior partition walls and other additional furnishings. This flexibility created “free plans” and “free façades” frequently compared to the type of Modernist Architecture exemplified by the “Domino System” of Le Corbusier.

These kind of flexibility was well reflected in textual records. For example, under the Liang kingdom of the Southern Dynasties, in the final years of the Tianjian 天監 era (502-519 CE), a monastery called Zhuangyansi 莊嚴寺 held eight imperially sanctioned “Dharma-wheel lectures”. The much reverend monk Sengmin 僧旻 (467-527 CE) was to give the very last lecture:

[At that time] his followers were many. The lecture hall of the Zhuangyansi was established by Emperor Shizu of the Song kingdom (r. 454-65). [The hall] had many bracket-sets that extended far beyond [to support its deep eaves]. When [Sengmin’s] day came the [lecture hall] was not big enough for the audience. When the stewards heard of this they sent an edict to suspend the talk for five days. [During this time] they moved all the doors and windows [outward] to the eaves on four sides. [The officials] also arranged for fifty [seating] platforms to be placed

close together [before the pulpit]. Every edge of [these seats] was filled for ten days and many were saved [by this newly expanded hall].<sup>873</sup>

眾徒彌盛。莊嚴講堂。宋世祖所立。欒欏增映延袤遐遠。至於是日不容聽眾。執事啟聞。有敕聽停講五日。悉移窗戶四出檐霤。又進給床五十張。猶為迫迮。桺桺摧折日有十數。得人之盛皆此類焉。<sup>874</sup>

Also evident in textual records was the more drastic expansion of monastic buildings by adding axially structures. When Sengmin gave a lecture at the Jianjingsi 簡靜寺:

At that time the [lecture] hall only had five bays, but [Sengmin] feared that this would be too cramped. [He] came up with an idea to build a five bay [building] in front of the hall, and combined these two [structures] into one [building]. Whenever there was a lecture, [the new hall] would be completely filled.<sup>875</sup>

又堂宇先有五間。慮有迫迮。又於堂前權起五間。合而為一。及至就講。寺內悉滿。<sup>876</sup>

As in the case of Zhuangyansi, the lecture hall at Jianjingsi was expanded to house overflowing crowds.

Returning to the case of Foguangsi, it is worth noting that its style is more akin to a hybrid of earth and timber, rather than standard timber-frame structures. The enclosure of northern architecture tend to be thicker, often made of rammed-earth or brick, and therefore less easy to be moved adjusted once built in place. For the architecture of the Buddha Hall, however, its history of structural changes inform us that a certain freedom of design is possible even after the buildings' completion. As I explained in Chapter 4, the current plan of the Buddha Hall perfectly resembles the “concentric layout”, a form of foundation

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<sup>873</sup> Translation modified after Li Yuqun 2009b, 650, and Jonathan E. E. Pettie 2013, 186-187

<sup>874</sup> *Continued Biographies* (T50n2060), 0468b.

<sup>875</sup> Translation modified after Li Yuqun 2009 b, 650 and Jonathan E. E. Pettie 2013, 187.

<sup>876</sup> *Continued Biographies* (T50n2060), 0462c–0463a.

designed for architecture with front porticos, canonized in the *Building Standards*.

Although tracing the enclosing walls along the footings would be the most logical option, the foundation footings do not necessarily confine the spatial arrangement of the built structure. It appears that later alternations that relocated the front façade worked out just as well, because such a change only concerns the Buddha Hall's partition and fenestration arrangements, without compromising the form of its column-grid. Such a flexibility inherent in the timber-framed structural system has been noted in the study of Chinese timber-framed architecture early on.

The renovation that took place at the Buddha hall of Foguangsi is very similar to the emergency remodeling of the lecture hall at Zhuangyansi mentioned above,. At Zhuangyansi, the open porticos on all four sides were merged into the core space in order to host the massive crowd. At Foguangsi, which presumably only had a front portico, incorporated this space most likely to make room for the “five hundred” arhat statue additions. Contemporary structures that exhibit notable alterations in later periods include the Main Hall at the Flower Grove Monastery in Fuzhou,<sup>877</sup> and the Three Purities Hall at the Temple of Primordial Sublimity in Putian.<sup>878</sup> Both located in Fujian province, with front porticos and much humble 3-by-3 bay layouts. Later renovations have enclosed their porticos and added auxiliary structures surrounding their core space. Based on his studies of Baoguosi, Zhang Shiqing has speculated that disappearance of front porticos, in these

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<sup>877</sup> Lin Zhao 1956.

<sup>878</sup> Lin Zhao 1957.



cases, might have been triggered by the inconvenience to perform Buddhist rituals under the eaves of the front portico during rainy weather.<sup>879</sup>

This rich palimpsest of renovations, alterations, and additions accumulated through the monastery's long existence is by no means unique to Chinese architecture. It is instrumental to take a brief excursion and examine several cases in Japan. In regard to the transformation of the portico space, from the Nara period to the Heian period, there were many halls built with colonnaded façades, with the Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji as a representative example.<sup>880</sup> Buildings with similar layouts but no longer stands include the Middle Golden Hall 中金堂 of the Kōwaratera 川原寺 and the Golden Hall of the Keharahaiji 毛原廃寺.<sup>881</sup> (Figure 77) The merits of sheltered portico space are it allows the worshipers to pray or read sūtras, and even stay for longer rituals without the disturbance by the weather.

In addition to the structural and practical aspects of porticos, Mitsuo Inoue noted the spatial and religious significance behind the emergence of such models. He noted that the space inside Nara period buildings was at first exclusively reserved for the Buddha. The

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<sup>879</sup> Zhang Shiqing 2013. Mitsuo Inoue has observed that the space inside Nara period buildings was exclusively reserved for the Buddha. The inner space occupied by the altar, even though aisles are present as a structural element, they are marginal spaces, forbidden from entering. Consequently, rituals of worship were conducted outside the building.

<sup>880</sup> Mitsuo Inoue 1985, 96 and 105.

<sup>881</sup> It should be pointed out that the use of colonnaded façades, although characteristic, was not limited to the Nara period Buddhist halls. Other extant examples from later period include the East Golden Hall 東金堂 of the Kōfukuji 興福寺, the Golden Hall of the Kikōji 喜光寺 and the Lecture Hall of the Kōryūji 広隆寺. They were believed to be built with an archaic style. See Mitsuo Inoue 1985, 62, note 25; Yamagishi Tsuneto 2005, 16.

inner space occupied by the altar, even though aisles are present as a structural element, they are marginal spaces, forbidden from entering. Consequently, rituals of worship were conducted outside the building.<sup>882</sup> It was roughly around the late Heian period, “worship halls (礼堂)” started to be added in Buddhist temples as sheltered spaces for the object. They took forms as a front veranda created by extending the roof of the “principal hall (正堂)”, or as a separate building in front of the main structure.<sup>883</sup>

The Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji is earliest extant architecture with a open front portico. Although the portico is an integrate part of the architecture, we know from contemporary record that this colonnaded space was referred to as a “worship hall”. This term was unmistakably a parallel development comparable to the independent “worship halls” added in front of monastic buildings.<sup>884</sup> Mitsuo regarded the emergence of front porticos as signaling the establishment of a sheltered space for human use (“space for the object”) close to the sanctum (“space for the subject”). However, it should be noted that the distinction still existed between the object and the subject, and visitors as well as the monastic community at the Tōshōdaiji probably did not proceed beyond the portico into

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<sup>882</sup> Mitsuo Inoue 1985. In addition to the spatial layout that distinguishes these two areas, Yamagishi Tsuneto pointed out that textual sources also support a ritual distinction in keeping with this “structural logic”. For instance, the *Daybook of the Golden Hall* 金堂日記 of the Hōryūji kept close attention to any visits of the building interior of the Golden Hall, which suggests it is usually forbidden from entering. It recorded events that took place prior to the late tenth century (Yamagishi Tsuneto 2005, 22).

<sup>883</sup> Mitsuo Inoue 1985, 92. A similar trend is evident in Shinto architecture, where Worship Halls (礼殿, or later, 拜殿) were developed as interior spaces for worship. However, unlike Buddhist architecture, Shinto Worship Halls separate structures, due to the basic fetishist tendency in Shinto thought that regarded main sanctuary as a secret and isolated place for the deity (Ibid., 96-102).

<sup>884</sup> Mitsuo Inoue 1985, 61, note 24.

the side and back aisles in the sanctum during worship.<sup>885</sup>

In the next stage of development, independent worship halls and principal halls were gradually merging together as well, creating “complex interior spaces”,<sup>886</sup> composed of both “inner sanctuaries (内陣)” and “outer sanctuaries (外陣)”.<sup>887</sup> It anticipates the integration of these two spaces, merging areas with different attributes and functions within the same building interior, which signifies that the Buddha and human worshiper finally shared the space on an equal footing. Different stages of construction in the history of the Mandara Hall at the Taimadera 當麻寺, located in Nara, Japan, best illustrate this point. (Figure 78)

According to Fujii Keisuke and others, this further spatial development in Japanese monastic architecture may have been triggered by the increasingly popular observance of “Buddhist retreat (参籠)” among aristocrats, which often included confining oneself in a temple for a prolonged period, increased chatting of prayers and sometime engaging in fasting.<sup>888</sup> Particularly, a kind of “*bukkei* (物詣, var. 仏詣)” practice that emphasized obtaining close contact with Buddhist icons prompted the expansion of space next to the sanctum. Additionally, the main goal of such practices was to receive dreams in which presence of the Buddhist deity is revealed, and the practitioners would stay next to the icon much longer compared to activities such as regular worship and ritual gatherings. It was

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<sup>885</sup> Yamagishi Tsuneto 2005, 21-23.

<sup>886</sup> Mitsuo Inoue 1985, 102-105.

<sup>887</sup> Mitsuo chose the terms of inner and outer sanctuaries to show differentiation with an earlier Heian period model composed of “golden halls (金堂)” and the “main halls (本堂)”.

<sup>888</sup> Yamagishi Tsuneto 2005; Fujii Keisuke 2013, 25-43.

then also necessary that the appended space was reasonably sheltered. In the *Illustrated Scrolls of the Founding of Ishiyamadera* 石山寺縁起絵巻, worshipers were indeed depicted lying outside the icon hall. In one scene, a group of people in sound sleep was being approached by an animated Buddhist statue, presumably to portray their experience of epiphanies in dreams. (Figure 79)

It is interesting to note that similar practices were described in Chinese sources as well. The Grand Councilor Zhang Shangying, for example, frequently retreated to Mount Wutai in quest for Buddhist miracles. Zhang noted seeing golden lamps lightening up the interior of Buddha halls during his travel in the Wutai area in Yuanyou 2 (1087 CE).<sup>889</sup> The most detailed account, however, was found in the travelogue of Jōjin. During his stay in the Cloister of True Presence 真容院 of the Central Terrace in Xining 5 (1072 CE), Jōjin recounted that:

At 3 PM, [we] settled in our lodging place, which was solemnly decorated and extremely pleasant. The altar was covered by layers of curtains made from painted colorful brocades. [We] first took a bath at the Washing Hall. Thereupon, [we] entered a hall to reverence the Buddha and offer incense. The interior of the hall was solemnly decorated and beyond imagination, filled with seven jewels and precious perils. [I] set up a meditation bed in front of the Buddha, and spent the entire night there. The novices all returned to their dorms. On [their] way back, they saw five-colored clouds emerging above the roof of the Western Hall. The envoys saw it first, and told me, and I was among the second to witness. There were several monks and travelers [sleeping] inside the hall, where Mañjuśrī was united with the

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<sup>889</sup> Although spectacular manifestations of light occur at many religious sites, as Raoul Birnbaum has pointed out, the Wutai Mountains are a “preeminent site in China for such events”, and “[re]ports of these appearances of light have become central to characterizations of the power of the place”. See Raoul Birnbaum 2004, 195, and for some Mount Wutai miraculous tales related to visions of light, see *ibid.*, 197-223. See also Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 197-199.

[Mandalas] of the Two Worlds. [I] made offerings immediately by burning all kinds of incense. [I] then paid homage chanting the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, followed by one hour of chanting the *Lotus Sūtra*, for about four or five time. [I] slept on the meditation bed for the entire night, and most amazingly, never once did [I] want to pee. I offered [a copy of] the *Lotus Sūtra* provided by the Empress Dowager of the Inner Palace.

申一點。入安下房。莊嚴甚妙也。重々以色錦等所畫幔帳之敷坐。先行浴堂沐浴了。次入堂禮佛燒香。堂內莊嚴不可思議。七寶真珠充滿。佛前立禪床。終夜宿。小師皆歸房了。於途中見西堂頂現五色雲。使臣先見之告。予次見之也。堂中諸僧。行者有其數。而文殊供兩界合行。直界供養。燒種々香。次如意輪供。次法華法一時。經第四五了。終夜於禪床睡。夜無小便。思最奇異也。皇太后宮法華經奉供養了。

It is worth noting that as early as in the Northern Song dynasty, the practice of sleeping inside Buddha halls and hoping to encounter miraculous events was already in place.

Therefore, when considering the historical development of architecture and the transformation of a certain structure, while it is important to consider factors from practical concerns, including shading from sun or sheltering from rain, liturgical requirements, such as the need for distinguishing the sacred and the profane, are also important. With sanctums remain sacred space mostly free from human trespassing, an open portico or an enclosed front aisle provided the necessary space for worship. It is tempting to consider that intensified worshipping activities may have contributed to the disappearing of open portico space in the post-Tang period in north China.

It is beyond the scope of epilogue to fully address the rich and complex histories of Foguangsi in the post-Tang period. However, my discussions of the mysteries surrounding the Great Pavilion of Maitreya and the renovation of the Great Buddha Hall are aimed to highlight two especially important epochs of the monastery's revival. Together with the

preceding chapters that mainly focused on the monastery in the Sui and Tang period, this preliminary study is my attempt to address the neglect of the “social life” of sites in previous scholarship on Chinese architecture.<sup>890</sup> It has offered me an important tool to examine the essential characteristics of the site through its continual changing ownership and sponsorship, and the subsequent shifts from one social context to another. The meaning of the site, therefore, was also subject to radical change. At Foguangsi and Mount Wutai, varying perceptions of places and landscapes by different individuals, social groups, and cultures, in different periods, played a key role in forming their “biographies”. With the their designation as World Heritage Sites, the writing of the biographies have continued, not only by scholars from the field of art, architecture, history or religion, but also by monks, pilgrims, locals and tourists for years to come.

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<sup>890</sup> The use of the term “social life” or “biography” to refer to anything other than an account of a human life originated in anthropology and was initially used in relation to the often long history of prestigious objects. The method is referred to as the “social life of things” or the “cultural biography of things”. See Arjun Appadurai 1986; Igor Kopytoff 1986. Archaeologists quickly adopted this concept of biography, initiating “biographies of places” and later “biographies of landscapes”. See Tom Bloemers, Henk Kars and Arnold Van der Valk 2010. In addition, Lindsay Jones borrowed the “hermeneutics” concept in his two volume book *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison* to analyze responses to sacred architecture according to the human experience, mechanism, interpretation, and comparison of architecture (Lindsay Jones 2000), offering a theoretical framework compatible with the social life and cultural biography approach.

## APPENDIX A: THE MAKING OF MAÑJUŚRĪ'S MOUNT WUTAI

As Arthur Wright as astutely pointed out, in China, “from very early times, the importance of verbal statement in attaining or holding power has been emphasized by all statesmen and political thinkers”.<sup>891</sup> Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact beginning of religious activities at Mount Wutai, its association with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī 文殊師利 (var. 曼殊師利) through the names of the site, “*wutaishan* 五臺山/*wufengshan* 五峯山, lit. Five Terraces/Peaks Mountain)” or “*qingliangshan* 清涼山 (lit. Clear and Cool Mountain)”, can be taken as a point of departure. Since these names were considered significant components of the identity of the site, used to forge an important link with Mañjuśrī, if one can retrace this history of the naming of the site, it would be possible to ascertain the period when the site began to be actively developed. I demonstrate that in all likelihood, the designation of the site with these names was established roughly around the Sui and early Tang period, which postdated Mañjuśrī’s association with a certain “Five Terraces Mountain” or “Clear and Cool Mountain” in the Chinese Buddhist canon as early as the Jin 晉 dynasty (265-420 CE). Therefore, the association between this mountain site and the sacred abode of Mañjuśrī through its naming must have been premeditated rather than extemporal or coincidental.

I also discuss counterarguments, which fall into two categories. First, there had been countless efforts to date the naming of the site as “Five Terraces Mountain” or “Clear

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<sup>891</sup> Arthur F. Wright 1957, 72.

and Cool Mountain” to earlier periods, notably the Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534 CE) or the Northern Qi 北齊 (550-577 CE) dynasties. However, I argue that the textual evidence used by previous scholars were all produced around the early Tang period and therefore very questionable, albeit they recount events of early dates or reference older sources. Secondly, there have been concerns regarding the authenticity of the *sūtras* where Mañjuśrī established associations with certain mountain sites. This was a reasonable critique, since earlier texts could be corrupted as a retrospective means to sanctify the status of newly created Buddhist sites, as observed in the canonizations of Mount Emei 峨嵋山 in the Song dynasty and Mount Putuo 普陀山 in the Ming dynasty.<sup>892</sup> This possibility offers an alternative picture for the rise of Mount Wutai. However, it would not change the time and the motives behind this historical event.

#### **BUDDHIST SOURCES: LEGENDS OF MAÑJUŚRĪ'S SACRED REALM**

It has been pointed out that the *locus classicus* of the term “*qingliangshan* 清涼山 (Clear and Cool Mountain)” is in the *Great Corrective and Expansive Buddha's Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 大方廣佛華嚴經.<sup>893</sup> Consisting of sixty fascicles, it is the first extensive translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* in Chinese,<sup>894</sup> orchestrated by

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<sup>892</sup> See James M. Hargett 2007; Yü Chün-fang 2000.

<sup>893</sup> T09n0278. Étienne Lamotte has speculated that the passage where “*qingliangshan*” appeared was a Tang period interpolation (Étienne Lamotte 1960, 74-82). His arguments are discussed later in detail.

<sup>894</sup> There are three extensive translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. In addition to Buddhābhaddra's version from the Eastern Jin dynasty, two more versions were produced during the Tang dynasty period. The first Tang redaction was produced between Zhengsheng 證聖 1-Shengli 聖歷 2 (695-699 CE), by Śikṣhānanda 實叉難陀 (652-710 CE) and collaborators upon the commission of Empress Wu. The new translation was entitled the *Newly Translated Great Corrective and Expansive Buddha's Avataṃsaka Sūtra of the Great*



Buddhabhadra 佛陀跋陀羅 (359-429 CE) in Yuanxi 元熙 2 (420 CE) of the Eastern Jin 東晉 dynasty (317-420 CE):

In the northeast there is a place called *qingliangshan* (Clear and Cool Mountain). Since ancient times Bodhisattva assemblies have dwelled there. Now the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī lives there with his assembly of ten thousand Bodhisattvas. He is constantly present to preach the Dharma.

東北方有菩薩住處。名清涼山。過去諸菩薩常於中住。彼現有菩薩。名文殊師利。有一萬菩薩眷屬。常為說法。<sup>895</sup>

However, the Chinese rendering of Mañjuśrī's mountain seat appears to be fluid around this time. In a roughly contemporary text, the *Sūtra of Mañjuśrī's Parinirvāṇa* 佛說文殊師利般涅槃經,<sup>896</sup> it was rendered as the “Snow Mountain 雪山 (Skt. Himavat)” instead of “Clear and Cool Mountain”.<sup>897</sup>

The first extant appearance of the term “*wutaishan* 五臺山 (Five Terrace Mountain)” in reference to Mañjuśrī appeared in the *Account of the [Mysterious] Stimuli*

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*Zhou Dynasty* 大周新譯大方廣佛華嚴經 (T10n0279), consisting of eighty fascicles. The second Tang redaction was produced during Zhenyuan 貞元 12-14 (796-798 CE) by Prajñā 般若 (b. 734 CE). It was based on a forty-fascicle text of the “Chapter on the Entering of the Dharma Realm 入法界品” of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, offered by the King of Oḍḍiyāna 烏荼國. There were numerous shorter translations extracted from the larger *Avataṃsaka Sūtras*, referred to as the “smaller” *Avataṃsaka Sūtras*, which not always correspond to individual “chapters (品; Skt. *parivarta*)”. The *Biographies and Accounts Related to Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 華嚴經傳記 (T51n2073) alone listed thirty-five such titles. It was not clear whether the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* was known in India as one work, or it was only compiled under one title outside India from freestanding Indian *sūtras*. More on the transmission and translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, see Yang Weizhong 2005, 1-39; Imre Hamar 2007, 139-167. For discussion of the *sūtra*'s sources and formation, see Ōtake Susumu 2007, 87-107; Hori Shin'ichirō 2012, 15-35.

<sup>895</sup> T09n0278, 0590a.

<sup>896</sup> T14n0463. The text was often dated to ca. 280-312 CE of the Western Jin 西晉 dynasty (265-316 CE), and attributed to Dharmarakṣa and Nie Daozhen 聶道真 (ca. 280-312 CE). David Quinter reassessed this conventional dating, and suggested late-fourth through fifth centuries to be a more plausible bracket for this *sūtra*'s composition in Chinese, see David Quinter 2010, 97-128.

<sup>897</sup> T14n0463, 0480c. For a complete translation of the *sūtra* in English, see Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 41-45; Cartelli's translation was based on a French translation in Étienne Lamotte 1960, 35-39.

*and Responses Related to the Three Jewels in China* 集神州三寶感通錄 (hereafter *Account of Stimuli and Responses*), compiled by Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667 CE) in Linde 麟德 1 (664 CE):<sup>898</sup>

In the southeast of Dai prefecture, there is the *wutaishan* (Five Terrace Mountain). Anciently, it was said to be the dwelling of divine transcendents. This mountain encompasses three hundred li square, and its terrain is exceedingly precipitous and lofty. There are five tall terraces. Grasses and trees do not grow on its summits. A dense forest of conifers is overgrown on the valley floor. This mountain is extremely cold. Those to the south call it Clear and Cool Mountain. There also is established a Clear and Cool municipality. In scriptures, it is stated clearly that Mañjuśrī leads five hundred transcendents and dwells at a clear and cool snowy mountain. This is that very place.<sup>899</sup>

岱州東南五臺山。古稱神仙之宅也。山方三百里。極巉巖崇峻。有五高臺，上不生草木。松柏茂林。森於穀底。其山極寒。南號清涼山。亦立清涼府。經中明。文殊將五百仙人。往清涼雪山。即斯地也。<sup>900</sup>

However, there is good reason to believe that Mañjuśrī's associations with certain five terraces or peaks can be traced further back. According to Marcelle Lalou, although Mañjuśrī was not mentioned outside Mahāyāna Buddhist texts, there are clear similarities between him and a celestial musician (Skt. *gandharva*) known as Pañcaśikha (lit. five crests) in Sanskrit and Pali literature.<sup>901</sup> Following Louis de La Vallée-Poussin's

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<sup>898</sup> T52n2016. The date of compilation is given in Daoxuan's colophon. Nonetheless, as Shinohara Koichi has pointed out, it is important to keep in mind that Daoxuan's collection of Buddhist stories were based on earlier sources, most of which were long lost, such as the *Records of Signs from the Unseen Realm* 冥祥記 and *Biographies of Renowned Monks* 名僧傳. Additionally, according to Shinohara, further materials were added to the reprints in Zongzhang 总章 1 (668 CE) by Daoxuan's collaborator Daoshi 道世 (d. 668 CE ?). See Shinohara Koichi 1990, 319-380; id. 1991, 203-224; and id. 1998, 141-188.

<sup>899</sup> Translation modified after Raoul Bimbaum 1986, 120-121.

<sup>900</sup> Account of the [Mysterious] Stimuli and Responses Related to the Three Jewels in China (T52n2016), 0424c.

<sup>901</sup> Lalou points out that there are obvious parallels between Mañjuśrī and Pañcaśikha in their name, appearance, qualities and role. First, Bhadantācariya Buddhaghōṣa (fl. 5th c. CE) glossed Pañcaśikha's name

suggestion that “Mañjughoṣa (lit. sweet voice)” was Mañjuśrī’s original name, David L. Snellgrove has reconstructed the linguistic link between Pañcaśikha and Mañjughoṣa (Mañjuśrī), proposing that Pañcaśikha must have been the earliest form of Mañjuśrī.<sup>902</sup>

There is further evidence that reinforces such a connection. In the *Sūtra of Mañjuśrī’s Parinirvāṇa*, it was said that after Mañjuśrī entered the state of *śūraṅgama samādhi*,<sup>903</sup> his relics were buried on the Diamond Peak of “Fragrant Mountain 香山 (Skt. Gandhamādana)”.<sup>904</sup> According to the *Udāna Commentary*, this Fragrant Mountain is conventionally identified to be a part of a set of distinctive five-peaked mountains in the Himalayas, surrounding the Lake of “Clear and Cool (Skt. Anavatapta, lit. heat-free)”.<sup>905</sup> It may not be a coincidence that in the *Dīrghāgama*, Fragrant Mountain is described as the seat of Mañjughoṣa, the king of celestial musicians.<sup>906</sup> These rather complex affinities mentioned above suggest a long history behind the link between Mañjuśrī, the “Five Peaks/Terraces”, and the “Clear and Cool”. Unfortunately, since textual evidence is rather scarce, the historical circumstances behind this association remain obscure.

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as referring to a way of styling hair, while its synonym pañcacīraka was used to describe Mañjuśrī’s five locks of hair or a five-peaked crown. Second, they are both revered for their qualities of voice and speech, and their beauty of youth. In addition, they both serve as the interlocutor of the Buddha (Marcelle Lalou 1930, 66-70). However, as Anthony Tribe has pointed out, these links are very tenuous and can only remain as a speculation (Anthony Tribe 1997).

<sup>902</sup> Snellgrove argued that this transformation took place when the original epithet “Mañjughoṣa” referring to the quality of the deity’s voice, was taken as the actual name, while the name “Pañcaśikha” itself was considered as an epithet, describing the deity’s appearance of wearing his hair in five tresses or braids (David L. Snellgrove 1957, 61-62).

<sup>903</sup> *Śūraṅgama samādhi* implies *nirvāṇa* in this context.

<sup>904</sup> T14n0463, 0481b.

<sup>905</sup> See Anthony Tribe 1997, for an English translation of this passage, and Étienne Lamotte 1960, 35, for a French translation.

<sup>906</sup> See Anthony Tribe 1997, for an English translation of this passage.

## OFFICIAL HISTORIES: FROM LUYI/LÜYI TO WUTAI/QINGLIANG

The place that would later become Mount Qingliang or Mount Wutai was still in its infancy during the Jin dynasty, when these names themselves already appeared in the abovementioned Chinese translations of Buddhist texts. According to the *Book of Sui* 隋書,<sup>907</sup> the name “Wutai 五臺” did not come along until the Daye 大業 era (605-618 CE) of the Sui dynasty.<sup>908</sup> A government administration was established during the Han dynasty in the region that later become known as Wutai county, but it was first named as Luyi 慮虬.<sup>909</sup> Although abrogated during the Jin, it was restored as Lüyi 驢夷 under the Northern Wei.<sup>910</sup> Records in the geographic sections of the *Book of Han* 漢書, the *Book of Later Han* 後漢書 and the *Book of Wei* 魏書 all confirm this historical development.<sup>911</sup> Today, the Luyi River 慮虬河 that flows through Wutai county still bears vestiges of its ancient name. The different Chinese characters used to transcribe the regional names appear to be meaningless, suggesting that their phonetic use was more significant. Indeed, although these two names are pronounced differently in modern Mandarin, their phonations remain

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<sup>907</sup> Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-643 CE) et al. comp. bet. Zhenguan 3-10 (629-636 CE) of the Tang dynasty.

<sup>908</sup> *Book of Sui* (S45), f30, 19b. While the *Book of Sui* only roughly dates this change to “early years of the Daye 大業 era (605-618 CE)”, a later reference from the Tang dynasty, *Yuanhe Maps and Records of Prefectures and Counties* 元和郡縣[圖]志, compiled by Li Jifu 李吉甫 (758-814 CE) in Yuanhe 8 (813 CE), located it specifically to Daye 2 (606 CE). The entry on Wutai is more detailed in the latter, and it is recorded that the name of the county changed after the name of Mount Wutai, suggesting the rise of this site into prominence. See *Yuanhe Maps and Records of Prefectures and Counties* (S68), f18, 5b-6a.

<sup>909</sup> According to Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581-645 CE)’s annotation, “慮虬” is pronounced as “廬夷”.

<sup>910</sup> *Book of Sui* (S45), f30, 19b.

<sup>911</sup> *Book of Han* 漢書 (S45), f28-1, 21b; *Book of Later Han* 後漢書 (S45), f33, 14a; and *Book of Wei* 魏書 (S45), f106, 22a.

consistent in Middle Chinese.<sup>912</sup> Together with the pejorative animal associations of the “*lǔ* (驢)” character and the explicit use of “*yi* (夷, lit. nocuous)”, it would be a reasonable speculation that the ancient Luyi/Lüyi region may have had a strong non-Chinese population.<sup>913</sup>

#### GU YANWU’S THEORY OF NORTHERN QI ORIGIN

Previous scholars who attributed an earlier date to Mount Wutai’s name often relied on problematic sources. The first scholar to investigate the matter is probably Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682 CE), who concluded on a Northern Qi date for its origin.<sup>914</sup> The proof Gu used is a mention of “*wutaishan* 五臺山” in the “Biography of Bai Jian 白建傳” in the *Book of Northern Qi* 北齊書.<sup>915</sup> Although the main text of the *Book of Northern Qi* is considered to be a credible source, compiled by Li Baiyao 李百藥 (564-647 CE) in the early Tang period, Gu Yanwu’s quote comes from the “Appended Biographies 補列傳” section, which is a later supplement taken from the *History of the Northern Dynasties* 北史 edited by Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl.627-649 CE).<sup>916</sup> In contrast to Li Baiyao, who took over the *Book of Northern Qi* project from his father Li Delin 李德林 (532-591 CE), a historian serving at the Northern Qi court, Li Yanshou was considered less praiseworthy as a

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<sup>912</sup> According to Zhengzhang Shangfang 郑张尚芳’s reconstruction of Middle Chinese, both “慮虎” and “驢夷” would be pronounced as “lǒ-jił”, cf. Lin Liantong and Zhengzhang Shangfang, ed. 2012.

<sup>913</sup> See Frank Dikötter 1992, 4, and Paul R. Goldin 2011, 235-236, for discussions on the implications behind the choice of characters in transliterating terms associated with foreign cultures.

<sup>914</sup> Gu Yanwu 1983, 103-104.

<sup>915</sup> *Book of Northern Qi* (S45), f40, 8b.

<sup>916</sup> Wu Tianren 1990, 229; Zhang Qizhi, Chang Kuo-kang and Yang Shusen 2002, 227.

historian, for he used materials from unofficial histories and private anecdotes in his *History of the Northern Dynasties*. Thus, the reliability of the “Biography of Bai Jian” is greatly comprised, consequently weakening the theory of a possible Northern Qi date.

#### YEN KENG-WANG’S THEORY OF NORTHERN WEI ORIGIN

Another influential theory on the emergence of Mount Wutai was proposed by the renowned scholar of historical geography, Yen Keng-wang 嚴耕望 (Yan Gengwang; 1916-1996 CE).<sup>917</sup> Yen’s inquiry started with an insightful observation. When he set out to research the history of Mount Wutai during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, he noticed that none of the eminent monks recorded in Huijiao 慧皎 (497-554 CE)’s *Biographies of Eminent Monks* 高僧傳 or in Daoxuan’s *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* 續高僧傳 took residency in “Mount Wutai” or “Mount Qingliang”.<sup>918</sup> However, instead of following his initial suspicion that Buddhist activities in this area were probably still underdeveloped during this period, Yen is misled by a reference in the *Imperial*

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<sup>917</sup> Yen Keng-wang 2007, 249-258.

<sup>918</sup> As Yen Keng-wang has pointed out, none of the previous identifications of pre-Sui and Tang period Wutai monks is accurate. For instance, Yamazaki Hiroshi took Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (var. 菩提留支; a.k.a. Daoxi 道希; ca. 5th-6th c. CE) as from Mount Wutai due to a misinterpretation of “*nantai* (南臺)” as the Southern Range of Wutai Mountains (Yamazaki Hiroshi 1947, 265). Indeed, the suffix “*tai* (臺)” could also refer to branches of government agencies, especially for the Department of State Affairs 尚書省 (Charles O. Hucker 1985, 246, and 475-476). The usage of “*beitai* (北臺)” as the Northern Department of State Affairs was evident in the “Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism 釋老志”, in *Book of Wei* (S45). In the *Chronicle of the Three Jewels through the Ages* 歷代三寶紀 (T49n2034), “*beitai*” was used to refer to Pingcheng (a.k.a. Heng’an 恆安, capital of the State of Dai 代). Prefixes were adopted after the Northern Wei relocated its capital city from Pingcheng 平城 to Luoyang 洛陽, since when Luoyang was referred to as “*nantai*”, or the Southern Department of State Affairs, to be distinguished from the Northern Department of State Affairs in Pingcheng. In the case of Bodhiruci, “*nantai*” refers to Luoyang.

*Readings of the Taiping Era* 太平御覽 (hereafter *Imperial Readings*),<sup>919</sup> allegedly quoted from the *Annotated Waterways Classic* 水經注.<sup>920</sup>

Mount Wutai, for its five lofty peaks, is called the Five Terraces. [...] people consider this mountain as the capital of the transcendents. [...] The summit of the Northern Terrace is uninhabitable because it is [covered in] ice and snow no matter in winter or summer. It is the place where Mañjuśrī once tamed the poisonous dragon. Now populated with numerous Buddhist temples, it attracts visits from Buddhist monks and lay devotees for pilgrimage.<sup>921</sup>

水經注曰。五臺山。其山巒巍然。故曰五臺。[...] 俗人以為仙者之都矣。[...] 其北台之山。冬夏常冰雪。不可居。即文殊師利常鎮毒龍之所。今多佛寺。四方僧徒善信之士。多往禮焉。<sup>922</sup>

Yen Keng-wang suggested that this passage, probably from a lost entry on the Hutuo River 滹沱水,<sup>923</sup> attests to Mount Wutai's prominence as the sacred abode of Mañjuśrī was in place by the end of the Northern Wei period.

Yen Keng-wang's theory invites reexamination on several levels. At the outset, Yen skipped large chunks of texts in the quote above. An examination of the original and the more extensive paragraph in the *Imperial Readings* reveals that a parallel passage could be

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<sup>919</sup> The *Imperial Readings* (S135) was compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996 CE) et al. during Taiping 太平 2-8 (977-985 CE) of Northern Song dynasty.

<sup>920</sup> The *Annotated Waterways Classic* is believed to be a Northern Wei exegesis composed by Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (d. 527 CE), based on a yet earlier work entitled the *Waterways Classic* 水經. Compilation date and author of the *Waterways Classic* were not entirely clear. Existing theories attribute the work to Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324 CE), active during the Eastern Jin dynasty, or Sang Qin 桑欽 (d. u.), who probably lived during the Eastern Han 東漢 (25-220 CE) or the Three Kingdoms 三國 (220-280 CE) period.

<sup>921</sup> The omitted parts in this translation are kept consistent with the quotation in Yen Keng-wang's original essay. See Yen Keng-wang 2007, 249.

<sup>922</sup> *Imperial Readings* (S135), f45, 6b-7a.

<sup>923</sup> The *Annotated Waterways Classic* was enlisted in the bibliography of the *Book of Sui* and the two Tang official histories, the *Old Book of Tang* and *New Book of Tang*, as consisting of 40 fascicles. However, five fascicles were already lost in the Northern Song period. The current version consisting of 40 fascicles took shape when later scholars rearranged the remaining fascicles (David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang 2010, 480-484).

found in the early Tang treatise, the *Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang* 古清涼傳 (hereafter the *Ancient Record*),<sup>924</sup> which is even longer and more comprehensive:

**Table 3. Comparisons between Parallel Paragraphs in the *Ancient Record* and the *Imperial Readings***<sup>925</sup>

<i>Sources</i>	<i>Ancient Record</i>	<i>Imperial Readings</i>
<i>Annotated Waterways Classic</i>	<p>The <i>Waterways Classic</i> of Li [Dao]yuan says, This mountain of five lofty peaks emerges above a group of mountains, therefore it is called Five Peaks. In Yongjia 3 of the Jin dynasty, more than one hundred families from Suoren County of Yanmen Commandery fled the disorders and entered this mountain. When they saw the mountain, the people rushed to it and did not return home. Thus, they dwelled peacefully in the cliffs and the wilds. Gentlemen who came to investigate saw these settlers from time to time, but when they came to visit, they did not know where the settlers were. That is why people consider this mountain as the capital of the transcendents.</p> <p>酈元水經雲。其山五巒巍然。迴出群山之上。故謂五峯。晉永嘉三年。雁門郡窳人縣百餘家。避亂入此山。見山人為之步驅而不返。遂甯居岩野。往還之士時有望其居者。至詣尋訪。莫知所在。故人以是山為仙者之都矣。</p>	<p>The <i>Annotated Waterways Classic</i> says, <b>Mount Wutai, for its five lofty peaks, it is called the Five Terraces.</b> In Yongjia 3 of the Jin dynasty, more than five hundred families fled the disorders and entered this mountain. When they saw the mountain, the people rushed to it and did not return home. Thus, they dwelled peacefully in the cliffs and the wilds. Gentlemen who came to investigate saw these settlers from time to time, but when they came to visit, they did not know where the settlers were. That is why <b>people consider this mountain as the capital of the transcendents.</b> 水經注曰。五臺山。其山巒巍然。故曰五臺。晉永嘉三年。雁門郡人五百餘家。避亂入此山。見山中人為先驅。因而不返。遂寧岩野。往還之士稀有望見其村居者。至詣尋訪。莫知所在。故俗人以為仙者之都矣。</p>
—	(corresponding descriptions found in fascicle 2 of the <i>Ancient Record</i> )	<p>The summit of the Central Terrace has a circumference of three <i>li</i>. To the northwest, there is spring whose water does not flow. It is called the Great Flower Spring. [The Central Terrace] rises above the layered peaks of the Five</p>

<sup>924</sup> Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takeo first took notice of what appeared to be three parallel passages. In addition to the *Ancient Record*, there is a reference similar to the *Imperial Readings* passage in its contemporary *Universal Geography of the Taiping Era* 太平寰宇記 (S68). See Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takeo 1942, 11-12.

<sup>925</sup> The parts cited by Yen Keng-wang are highlighted in bold.



		<p>Terraces.</p> <p>中台之山。山頂方三裡。西北陬有一泉水不流。謂之太華泉。蓋五台之層秀。</p>
<i>Classic of the Transcendents</i>	<p>The <i>Classic of the Transcendents</i> says, Wutai is called Purple Palace because it always has purple vapors. The transcendents dwell there.</p> <p>仙經雲。五臺山名為紫府。常有紫氣。仙人居之。</p>	<p>The <i>Classic of the Transcendents</i> says, Wutai is called Purple Palace. The transcendents dwell there.</p> <p>仙經雲。此山名為紫府。仙人居之。</p>
<i>Record of Strange Manifestations</i>	<p>The <i>Record of Strange Manifestations</i> says, Yanmen has Mount Wutai. The mountain is shaped like five mounds. One terrace is always dark and is not clearly distinguishable. When the sky is clear and the clouds disperse, it sometimes emerges.</p> <p>旌異記雲。雁門有五臺山。山形有五峙。一台常晦。不甚分明。天清雲散。有時而出。</p>	—
<i>Description Encompassing the Earth</i>	<p>The <i>Description Encompassing the Earth</i> says, This mountain has coiled layers of lush peaks, twisted and winding paths, numinous peaks and divine gorges. Those who are not petty or vulgar are able to stay. Those who remain are all gentlemen who rest in meditation. The streams are profound thoughts, and the thunder is the sound of the Dharma. The surrounding fragrant mist is a mind of compassion and enlightenment. It is deeply remote from the self. Those who first journeyed to this mountain did not return.</p> <p>括地志雲。其山層盤秀峙。曲徑縈紆。靈嶽神溪。非薄俗可棲止者。悉是棲禪之士。思玄之流。及夫法雷震音。芳煙四合。慈覺之心。邈然自遠。始驗遊山者往而不返。</p>	—
—	(corresponding descriptions found in fascicle 2 of the <i>Ancient Record</i> and other sources)	<p><b>The summit of the Northern Terrace is uninhabitable because it is [covered in] ice and snow no matter in winter or summer. It is the place where Mañjuśrī once tamed the poisonous dragon. Now populated with numerous</b></p>

		<p><b>Buddhist temples, it attracts visits from Buddhist monks and lay devotees for pilgrimage.</b>  其北台之山。冬夏常冰雪。不可居。即文殊師利常鎮毒龍之所。今多佛寺。四方僧徒善信之士。多往禮焉。<sup>926</sup></p>
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In addition to the *Annotated Waterways Classic* and the *Classic of the Transcendents* 仙經, the *Ancient Record* cited additional sources including the *Record of Strange Manifestations* 旌異記 and the *Description Encompassing the Earth* 括地志.<sup>927</sup> It is clear from the table above that both passages were patchworks compiled from a variety of sources, both cited sources that have been confirmed as written during the Sui and Tang period. The *Imperial Readings* passage may or may not be directly based on the *Ancient Record*, since there may have been a common source for both passages that is no longer extant. Nonetheless, despite a few differences, the *Imperial Readings* passage appears to have been condensed from rewriting. For example, the part about the Central and Northern Terraces in the *Imperial Readings* passage appears to be summarized from other sections found in the *Ancient*

<sup>926</sup> The description of the Northern Terrace seems to have been jeopardized with general comments of the Wutai Mountains that do not have parallels in the *Ancient Record*. Nevertheless, it is clear that the writing based on other accounts of Mount Wutai available at the time. For instance, an earlier reference to the legend of Mañjuśrī's taming of the poisonous dragon can be found in Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762-779 CE)'s reply to a memorial presented to the throne by Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (abbr. 不空; 705-774 CE) in Dali 大曆 8 (773 CE) of the Tang dynasty. See *Collection of Memorials by the Great Monk Amoghavajra of Critical Wisdom and Vast Knowledge, the Tripiṭaka Master, bestowed as the Grand Excellency of Works under Emperor Daizong* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集 (T52n2120), 0842a.

<sup>927</sup> The *Description Encompassing the Earth* was compiled by Xiao Deyan 蕭德言 (558-645 CE) et al. under the Prince of Wei 魏王, Li Tai 李泰 (620-653 CE), during Zhenguan 11-16 (637-642 CE) of the Tang dynasty. The complete treatise has been lost, but partially preserved in various sources where its passages were quoted. The *Record of Strange Manifestations* was attributed to the Sui dynasty author Hou Bai 侯白 (a.k.a. Hou Junsu 侯君素) and is no longer extant. The *Classic of the Transcendents* was a lost Daoist text, some scholars have argued for a Zuo Ci 左慈 (d. u.) attribution (Wang Jiakui 1997, 53-56), but not enough information was available to arrive at a definitive conclusion.

*Record*. Therefore, the evidence that Yen Keng-wang used to demonstrate Mount Wutai's association with Mañjuśrī's was not from lost passages of the *Annotated Waterways Classic*, but rather written by Song editors based on a Tang dynasty text.

As for the purported reference to Li Daoyuan's entry on Mount Wutai, aside from the *Ancient Record* and later sources that were based on it, the entry was not preserved elsewhere.<sup>928</sup> On the contrary, there is sufficient reason to treat the passage with caution. In the "Record of Topography 地形志" section of the *Book of Wei*, locations are not only introduced with the origins of its name and a brief administrative history, but also introduced with important rivers, mountains, and landmarks such as forts, shrines, and tombs of famous figures. Under the entry of "Lüyi", the list included "the Siyang fort 思陽城, the Lüyi fort 驢夷城, the Cang fort 倉城 and the Shrine of the King of Dai 代王神祠". No mountains or other shrines were mentioned.<sup>929</sup> In contrast, mountain sites that were already well known in this region, for instance, the ancient Mount Heng 恆山 (a.k.a. the Northern Peak 北嶽; Marchmount Heng 恆嶽),<sup>930</sup> Mount Gu 鼓山, Mount Bailu 白鹿山,

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<sup>928</sup> The entry cited in later sources varies significantly in length and detail, for instance, the *Ancient Record* referenced the name as the "Five Peaks (*wufeng* 五峯)", whereas the *Imperial Readings* used "Five Terraces (*wutai* 五臺)" in the same place instead.

<sup>929</sup> *Book of Wei* (S45), f106, 22a.

<sup>930</sup> It should be noted that the historical Mount Heng was the present-day Mount Damao 大茂山 (E114°15', N39°10'), located in Hebei province, to the north of Fuping 阜平, or northwest to Quyang 曲陽 where the Temple to the Northern Peak 北嶽廟 is located (Yen Keng-wang 2007, 116, and Fang Guangchang 1999, 166). According to early texts such as the *Book of Documents* 尚書, the *Literary Expositor* 爾雅 and the *Records of the Grand Historian* 太史公書 (a.k.a. 史記) and their traditional exegeses, the ancient Mount Heng 恆山 was named after Heng River 恆水, and been regarded as the Northern Peak of the ancient Five Peaks. During the reign of Liu Heng 劉恆 (202-157 BCE), the Emperor Wendi 文帝 (r. 180-157 BCE) of the Han dynasty, the site was renamed Mount Chang 常山 to avoid the tabooed character "*heng* (恆)" in his name. The original name of Mount Heng was soon restored after Emperor Wendi's death. According to the *Documents of History of Qing Dynasty* 清史稿, it was until the time of Emperor Shunzhi 順治 of the Qing

Mount Long 龍山 and so forth, were all identified in the same passage.<sup>931</sup>

#### OTHER THEORIES

A passage about the pioneering contributions of Dao'an 道安 (312-385 CE) who “erected *stūpas* and established monasteries in Mount Heng of Taihang 太行 [mountain range]” in Huangshi 皇始 3 (353 CE), of the Former Qin 前秦 (350-394 CE) of the Sixteen Kingdoms period (304-439 CE),<sup>932</sup> is sometimes used as evidence that Mount Wutai, being a nearby site, must have started to have Buddhist activities as well. Cui Zhengsen even interpreted “Taihang” and “Hengshan” as two distinct sites, and argued that “Taihang” must refer to Mount Wutai. Based on this misreading, Cui took Dao'an as the monk who first started Buddhist construction on Mount Wutai, and the Former Qin as the point of the Wutai monasteries' earliest origin.<sup>933</sup> However, Cui's speculation appears to be groundless. Tanluan 曇鸞 (var. 曇鸞; 476-542 CE),<sup>934</sup> sometimes treated as a forerunner of the Wutai monastic community, probably had a hometown near Wutai County.<sup>935</sup> However, Tanluan

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dynasty that the Northern Peak was “relocated” to the present-day Mount Heng 恆山 at Hunyuan 渾源, Shanxi province. The complexity involved in tracing the history of the Five Peaks in historical documents is discussed in James Robson 2009, 25-42 and Nancy Steinhardt 1998, 82-85. This kind of dislocation, however, is not unique for sacred peaks in China, for the history of the changing locations of Mount Heng 衡山 (a.k.a. the South Peak 南嶽; Marchmount Heng 衡嶽), see James Robson 2009, 66-84.

<sup>931</sup> *Book of Wei* (S45), f106, 22a.

<sup>932</sup> *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T50n2059), 0351c, and 0357c-0358a. See also Fang Guangchang 1999, 145-174.

<sup>933</sup> See Cui Zhengsen 2000, 77-88.

<sup>934</sup> Yen Keng-wang 2007, 251.

<sup>935</sup> Different places of origin were identified in different sources. The *Ancient Record*, the *Continued Biographies*, and the *Record of the Orthodox Lineage* and other sources gave Yanmen 雁門 as Tanluan's place of origin. On the other hand, according to a Tang dynasty text, the *Pure Land Treatise* 淨土論, he was a native of Wen River 汶水. In addition, in the *Biography of Master Tanluan* 釋曇鸞法師傳, the Japanese monk Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263 CE) recorded him as from Fen River 汾水.

left home at an early age and traveled south in search of spiritual enlightenment.<sup>936</sup> This, if anything, should be taken as evidence that the site (probably not yet known as Mount Wutai at the time) was too obscure to be mentioned, let alone be a prominent center of Buddhism. Otherwise, there would be no need for Tanluan to search for Buddhist teachings further afield.

Another eminent monk mentioned by Yen Keng-wang was Tanqian 曇遷 (542-607 CE), whose biography is included in the Tang dynasty text, the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*.<sup>937</sup> Nevertheless, Daoxuan only mentioned Tanqian's Mount Wutai experience in the Northern Qi and Northern Zhou period (ca. 560 CE) in passing, where he “witnessed all kinds of miraculous and extraordinary [things or beings] (備見神異)”, as a prelude to his Buddhist learning, which was quite similar to Tanluan's experience.<sup>938</sup> Yen Keng-wang named four other monks who had Mount Wutai associations, including Sengming 僧明, Tanyun 曇韻, Mingyin 明隱 and Huibin 慧斌, and suggested that they were already active during the Northern dynasties period.<sup>939</sup> Nevertheless, neither of them entered the Wutai Mountains prior to the beginning of the Sui period. Therefore, most of the identifications of Mount Wutai monks from the Northern Dynasties are unfounded.

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<sup>936</sup> As pointed out by Ono and Hibino, Tanluan was said to have been inspired by the “holy traces and miraculous beings (神跡靈怪)” of Mount Wutai, which may indicate the site was not yet a Buddhist center at this time (T50n2060, 0470a-0470c). See Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takeo 1942, 15-16.

<sup>937</sup> T50n2060, 0571b-0574b.

<sup>938</sup> In addition, like in other early Tang texts that recounted pre-Tang events that took place in Mount Wutai, the “Mount Wutai” identification may have been used because Daoxuan was writing retrospectively, not necessarily an indicator that the site was already named as such at the time when these events took place. For Tanqian's political career at the Sui court, see Chen Jinhua 2002a, 51-87.

<sup>939</sup> Yen Keng-wang 2007, 251-252.

Below is a compiled list of major sources used by previous scholars to examine the early history of Mount Wutai:

**Table 4. List of Major Sources for Mount Wutai's Early History**

Event	Alleged Date	Source	Source Date
King Yao 堯's vision of Mañjuśrī appearing on the Southern Terrace	early third millennium BCE	<i>Expanded Record of Mount Qingliang</i>	Jiayou 嘉祐 5 (1060 CE), Northern Song dynasty
Mount Wutai becoming the dwelling place of Mañjuśrī	during King Mu of Zhou 周穆王's reign in the tenth century BCE	<i>Record of the Miraculous Instructions [Given by the Deities] to Vinaya Master Daoxuan</i>	Qianfeng 乾封 2 (667 CE), Tang dynasty
Establishment of the Greatly Esteemed Vulture Peak Monastery 大孚靈鷲寺 at Mount Wutai	under Emperor Ming 明帝 (r. 57-75 CE), Eastern Han dynasty	<i>Account of the [Mysterious] Stimuli and Responses Related to the Three Jewels in China</i>	Linde 麟德 1 (664 CE), with additions up to Zongzhang 總章 1 (668 CE), Tang dynasty
	under Emperor Xiaowen 孝文帝 (r. 471-499 CE), Northern Wei dynasty	<i>Ancient Record of Mount Qingliang</i>	Yonglong 永隆 1 – Hongdao 弘道 1 (680-683 CE), Tang dynasty
Li Daoyuan's glossary on Mount Wutai in his <i>Annotated Waterways Classic</i>	Northern Wei dynasty	v.s.	v.s.
Establishment of the Foguangsi at Mount Wutai	under Emperor Xiaowen, Northern Wei dynasty	v.s.	v.s.
	under a certain “prince of Dangchang 宕昌王” of the Dangchang State, contemporary to the Northern Wei	<i>Further Record of Mount Qingliang</i>	Yuanyou 元祐 4 (1089 CE), Northern Song dynasty
Bai Jian 白建 entering the Wutai Mountains	Northern Qi dynasty	“Appended Biographies” section of the <i>Book of Northern Qi</i> , later added from the <i>History of the Northern Dynasties</i> .	ca. seventh century CE, Tang dynasty
Lu Taiyi 盧太翼 entering the Wutai Mountains	late Northern Qi dynasty	<i>Book of Sui</i>	Zhenguan 貞觀 10 (636 CE), Tang dynasty
Renaming Lüyi as Wutai	early Daye 大業 era (605-618 CE), Sui dynasty	v.s.	v.s.
	Daye 2 (606 CE), Sui dynasty	<i>Yuanhe Maps and Records of Prefectures</i>	Yuanhe 元和 8 (813)

		<i>and Counties</i>	CE), Tang dynasty
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Although the sources provide early dates and references to older references, it is clear that the first set of extant texts that mentioned “*wutai*” were all produced around the early Tang period. The name “*qingliang*” did not appear as its official designation in dynastic histories or administrative records at the time, and was first seen in the aforementioned *Account of Stimuli and Responses* by Daoxuan, which was also compiled in the early Tang. Therefore, one can conclude that it was not until the late-sixth century that the site formerly known as Luyi/Lüyi took on the name of Wutai and Qingliang. Furthermore, written half a century after the historical Luyi/Lüyi’s name was officially changed into Wutai, the association had already been fully established in Buddhist literature.

## FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

The oft-cited passage concerning Mañjuśrī’s dwelling place is excerpted from the “Chapter on the Dwelling Places of Bodhisattvas 菩薩住處品” in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. It is important to bear in mind the holistic picture of the chapter’s contents, which primarily listed eight Bodhisattvas, including Mañjuśrī, corresponding to the eight points of the compass. Additionally, the text named two Bodhisattvas who resided on the sea, and ten or so Bodhisattvas who dwelled in certain cities or states:<sup>940</sup>

**Table 5. Dwelling Places of Bodhisattvas according to Different Translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra***

<sup>940</sup> To be precise, thirteen in Buddhābhaddra’s version and twelve in Śikṣhānanda’s version.

<i>Sources</i>	<i>Great Corrective and Expansive Buddha's Avataṃsaka Sūtra</i> 大方廣佛華嚴經 (T09n0278)	<i>Newly Translated Great Corrective and Expansive Buddha's Avataṃsaka Sūtra of the Great Zhou Dynasty</i> <sup>941</sup> 大周新譯大方廣佛華嚴經 (T09n0279)
East / Best of Diamonds 金剛勝	Rise of the Transcendent Mountain 仙人起山	Transcendent Mountain 仙人山
South / Spiritual Wisdom 法慧	Outstanding Pavilion Peak 勝樓閣山	Outstanding Peak 勝峰山
West / Vigorous Fearless Action 無畏獅子行 (var. 精進無畏行)	Diamond Flame [Mountain] 金剛焰	Diamond Flame Mountain 金剛焰山
North / Musky Elephant 香象	Mass of Fragrance Mountain 香聚山	Mass of Fragrance Mountain 香積山
<b>North-east / Mañjuśrī 文殊師利</b>	<b>Clear and Cool Mountain 清涼山</b>	<b>Clear and Cool Mountain 清涼山</b>
South-east / Celestial Crown 天冠	Monument [Mountain] 枝堅固	Monument Mountain 支提山
South-west / Best of Sages 賢首 (var. 賢勝)	Mountain of Luminous Jyotiṣka 樹提光明山	Mountain of Light 光明山
North-west / Fragrant Light 香光明 (var. 香光)	Fragrant Breeze Mountain 香風山	Fragrant Breeze Mountain 香風山
In the Ocean <sup>942</sup> / Born of Dharma 曇無竭 (a.k.a. Faqi 法起)	Zhidan (?) 枳怛	Diamond Mountain 金剛山
In the Ocean	Cave of Merits and Adornments 功德莊嚴窟	Cave of Adornments 莊嚴窟
Other Dwellings of Bodhisattvas	1 Place of Abiding 善住, to the south of Vaishali city 毘舍離城南	Roots of Abiding 善住根, to the south of Vaishali 毘舍離南
	2 金燈僧伽藍, 巴連弗邑	——
	3 長養功德, in the state of Mathura 摩瑜羅國	Cave of Satisfaction 滿足窟, in the city of Mathura 摩度羅城
	4 Seat of Law 法座, in the state of Kuchana 拘陳那耶國	Seat of Law 法座, in the city of Kuchana 俱珍那城
	5 Mucilinda [Cave] of Merits 牟真鄰 陀功德, in the state of Pure Other Shore 清淨彼岸國	Mucilinda Cave 目真鄰陀窟, in the city of Pure Other Shore 清淨彼岸城

<sup>941</sup> Place names are mostly translated after Thomas Cleary 1993, 906-907.

<sup>942</sup> This is a major place where two translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* differ.



6	[A place] built by the Uninhibited Dragon King 無礙龍王所造, in the Land of Wind 風地內	[A place] built by the Uninhibited Dragon King 無礙龍王建立, in the state of Maratha 摩蘭陀國
7	Supreme Compassion 最上慈, in the state of Afghanistan 甘菩國	Producing Compassion 出生慈, in the state of Afghanistan 甘菩遮國
8	Cave of Original Man 那羅延山, in the <b>state of China</b> 真旦國土	Cave of Original Man 那羅延窟, in the <b>state of China</b> 震旦國
9	Oxhead Mountain 牛頭山, in a barbarian borderland 邊夷國土	Oxhead Mountain 牛頭山, in the state of Kashgar 疏勒國
10	Mount Udeśin 鬱提尸山, in the state of Kashmir 罽賓國土	Process 次第, in the state of Kashmir 迦葉彌羅國
11	Timofuhe (?) 梯羅浮訶, in the city of Dhananjaya (?) 難提拔檀那城	Cave of the Honorable One 尊者窟, in the city of Increasing Joy 增長歡喜城
12	Creating the Righteous and Suppressing the Crooked 正治邪曲, in the state of Abhurima 菴浮梨摩國	Seeing a Hundred Million Treasures of Light 見億藏光明, in the state of Abhurima 菴浮梨摩國
13	Cave of Tranquility 寂靜窟, in the state of Gandhara 乾陀羅國	Shangrila Cavern 苦婆羅窟, in the state of Gandhara 乾陀羅國

Note that these additional dwelling places of Bodhisattvas include the Nārāyaṇa Mountain (Buddhabhadra: 那羅延山; Śikṣhānanda: 那羅延窟) of China (Buddhabhadra: 真旦; Śikṣhānanda: 震旦). As Kanbayashi Ryūjō has observed, the internal logic of the text suggests that the eight primary locations (including Mañjuśrī's dwelling) and other places on the list were not located within China, but within the Indic world instead.<sup>943</sup>

#### EASTERN JIN INTERPOLATION?

There have been questions concerning the authenticity of the passage on Mañjuśrī's dwelling place that appeared in the *Great Corrective and Expansive Sūtra of the Buddha's Flower Adornment*. Japanese and Chinese scholars have overwhelmingly followed the

<sup>943</sup> Kanbayashi Ryūjō 1935, 877.

view suggested by primer scholars Takamine Ryōshō and Lü Cheng that Buddhahadra and his collaborators entered the passage into the existing text during the Eastern Jin translation process, knowingly alluding to the actual site located in China. Some even went on to argue that the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* must have been a falsified Buddhist *sūtra* created somewhere near the Chinese heartland, probably in the “Western Regions”, since its authors was so familiar with Chinese geography and intentional referenced Chinese locus.<sup>944</sup>

This hypothesis is flawed for the following reasons. First, as I have demonstrated, there is no evidence that “*qingliangshan*” or “*wutaishan*” was already used to name actual mountain sites in Buddhahadra’s time. Secondly, as Marcelle Lalou, Louis de La Vallée-Poussin, David L. Snellgrove and Anthony Tribe have suggested, the association between Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, the “Clear and Cool” and the “Five Peaks” in Mahāyāna texts, echoed the complex links between the deities Mañjughoṣa and Pañcaśikha, the Lake of Clear and Cool surrounded by the five-peaked Fragrant Mountain in earlier canons.<sup>945</sup> It is inconceivable that *sūtra* translators would take an obscure name of a Chinese locus, insert it in a fabricated *sūtra* as Mañjuśrī’s mountain seat, and somehow the names accidentally correspond with existing Buddhist canons.

#### TANG DYNASTY INTERPOLATION?

Through a study on a ninth-century Tibetan translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*

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<sup>944</sup> Takamine Ryōshō 1979, 7-8; Lü Cheng 1979, 41.

<sup>945</sup> See note 902 above.

made during the early Tang dynasty, Étienne Lamotte noticed that in the Tibetan version, the dwelling place of Mañjuśrī was given as the “Grassy Mountain (Skt. Śādvalaparavata)”, which was very different from the “Clear and Cool Mountain” translation. Additionally, the direction of the mountain was said to be “in the east”, which disagrees with the northeast direction in all the Chinese versions. (Table 5) Lamotte went on to conclude that the change was most likely an interpolation made by Śikṣhānanda and his collaborators upon producing their new redaction, the *Newly Translated Great Corrective and Expansive Sūtra of the Buddha’s Flower Adornment of the Great Zhou Dynasty*, for Empress Wu during the early Tang. Lamotte has also suggested that by that time, the mountain site was already established as the sacred realm of Mañjuśrī, celebrated by the name Mount Qingliang. Lamotte believed it was around the same period, if not earlier, that the Eastern Jin translation was altered as well.<sup>946</sup>

The reasons that would refute a theory of Jin dynasty interpolation, namely the preexisting links between the deities Mañjuśrī, Mañjughoṣa and Pañcaśikha, could also be used to question Lamotte’s argument. Therefore, even if Lamotte’s theory stands, that is, if the names of “Mount Qingliang” and “Mount Wutai” were first adopted by the site and then canonized into Buddhist scriptures in early Tang, it would only seem reasonable that the names were forged based on knowledge of Buddhist literature. In addition, it would not

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<sup>946</sup> Given the historical circumstances, Lamotte argued that it was not impossible, but nonetheless very unlikely, that this passage was introduced as early as in the Eastern Jin by Buddhahadra. Étienne Lamotte 1960, 74-82. Tansen Sen, in referring to Lamotte, misread his conclusion and cited Buddhahadra as the executor of this interpolation (Tansen Sen 2003, 77). Sen’s arguments echoed theory held by Takamine Ryōshō, Lü Cheng and others.

change the observation that the site was not actively promoted until the time of early Tang dynasty when the interpolation took place.

## PHYSICAL TOPOGRAPHY AND MYTHICAL LANDSCAPE

It is also important that one should not take these names at their face values.<sup>947</sup> For instance, the name “Five Terraces/Peaks” is a reflection more of prescribed ideas about the mountains than naturally derived from the topographic features of the site.<sup>948</sup> In the aforementioned *Ancient Record*, Huixiang lamented that different sources differ on which five peaks are referenced,<sup>949</sup> betraying the fact that the propagated five lofty peaks were less dramatic in reality, and could hardly be distinguished from the rest. Indeed, according to Yanyi’s *Expanded Record*, the designation of the Southern, Central and Northern Terraces changed in the early Tang period (Map 3).<sup>950</sup> The shifting identifications of the five peaks and the consequent trouble of locating them speak to the fact that “having five

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<sup>947</sup> This understanding is different from Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takeo, who have speculated that when the need arose to locate Mañjuśrī’s adobe in China, Luyi/Lüyi mountain area emerged as an ideal candidate, since it “naturally” matches the position, as well as the Clear and Cool weather and the formation of its peaks described in Buddhist literatures. It was then this area came to be attached to the names of “Clear and Cool (*qingliang*)” and “Five Terraces (*wutai*)” (Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takeo 1942, 4-25, esp. 21-22). As demonstrated in the following discussions, these names do not come “naturally”. Rather, they were probably given to the Luyi/Lüyi Mountains with the specific goal to match with the names of Mañjuśrī’s mountain seat described in Buddhist scriptures.

<sup>948</sup> Daoxuan emphasized the distinctiveness of the five peaks in the *Account of Stimuli and Responses* (T52n2106), 0424c. Huixiang made a similar claim in the *Ancient Records* (T51n2098), 1093a.

<sup>949</sup> T51n2098, 1093c.

<sup>950</sup> T51n2099, 1105b. Yanyi said that the East and West Peaks were the same in the older designations as in his day, however, the North, Central and South Peaks were shifted further towards the south. The ancient North Peak was located at the Mount Dahuangjian 大黃尖, while the ancient Central Peak corresponds to the current North Peak, and the ancient South Peak corresponds to the current Central Peak. See also Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 94-96.

peaks” is better understood as an attribution rather than an attribute. The same can be said to the literary inflation of the “table-topped” formations of the peaks and its “Clear and Cool” weather.<sup>951</sup>

Nevertheless, since the *Account of Stimuli and Responses* and the *Ancient Record*, the corpus of miracle tales that aided the rise of the Mañjuśrī cult on Mount Wutai had been gradually absorbed into the growing Chinese Buddhist canon. This association was reaffirmed by other Buddhist texts produced during the seventh and eighth centuries, as well. The *Biographies and Accounts Related to the Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 華嚴經傳記,<sup>952</sup> the *Dharani of the Storehouse of the Dharma Treasure of the Mañjuśrī Sūtra* 文殊師利寶藏陀羅尼經,<sup>953</sup> the *Commentary to the Great Corrective and Expansive Buddha’s Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏,<sup>954</sup> and the Preface to the *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* 佛頂尊

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<sup>951</sup> Both Daoxuan and Huixiang further stated that the five mountaintops were flat like tables, where no grass or tree can grow. See *Account of Stimuli and Responses* (T52n2106), 0424c; and *Ancient Record* (T51n2098), 1093a. This is also more likely to be a mythical depiction than a reflection of the Wutai physical geography. As Mary Anne Cartelli has noted, in reality, the “terraces” roughly form the shape of an arc (Mary Anne Cartelli 2013, 39). However, where did this image of flat-topped mountains come from, and why would it be ideal? “Having flat tops” is not mentioned as a trait of Mañjuśrī’s dwelling in Buddhist scriptures, but it may have been a projection of images of other sacred mountains of Indian, especially the world mountain Mount Meru, which was said to resemble the shape of a goblet or a cup in South Asia cosmology. The wide flat space on the top of Mount Meru was known as “Trāyastriṃśa Heaven 忉利天” in the Buddhist tradition, believed to be a realm where supernatural beings reside. As for the Clear and Cool weather, it was hardly a decisive factor in recognizing the Luyi/Lüyi Mountains as Mount Qingliang. It was more likely a name taken from the *Flower Adornment Sūtra*. As mentioned already, in the earlier *Sūtra of Mañjuśrī’s Parinirvana*, the prophesied place was translated differently as the “Snow Mountain 雪山”. Daoxuan’s record in the *Account of Stimuli and Responses* may have displayed traces of associating these two names by jeopardizing them together, as he used the description “a Clear and Cool snowy mountain (清涼雪山)” (T52n2106, 0424c).

<sup>952</sup> T51n2073, 0157a-0157c.

<sup>953</sup> T20n1185b, 0798a-0798b.

<sup>954</sup> T35n1735, 0859c.

勝陀羅尼經<sup>955</sup> are just a few examples.

The mythical image of Mount Wutai even gradually surmounted reality from the early Tang period onward. Its “five peaks” were illustrated to fit its image as table-topped and distinctively rising above all in “Pictures of Mount Wutai” and later illustrations of Mount Wutai in local gazetteers. Gradually, the number “five” gained significance independently,<sup>956</sup> and manifested in other aspects related to Mañjuśrī.<sup>957</sup> For example, in the popularity of the “five-syllable mantras” related to him,<sup>958</sup> promoted by texts such as the *Chapter on the Five-Syllable Heart Dharani of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī from the Sūtra of the Diamond Peak* 金剛頂經曼殊室利菩薩五字心陀羅尼品<sup>959</sup> and the *Five-Syllable Yoga Practice of the Youthful Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī* 曼殊室利童子菩薩五字瑜伽法.<sup>960</sup> Visualization of the syllables in Siddham script was sometimes used as an alternative of the five rising peaks in the background of Mañjuśrī on small iconographic drawings or woodcut prints.<sup>961</sup> (Figures 82-85) Mount Wutai’s relationship with Mañjuśrī also came full circle when esoteric images of the Bodhisattva emerged, as a youth with five

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<sup>955</sup> T19n0967; cf. “Preface”, 0349b-0349c

<sup>956</sup> Lin Wei-cheng also made note the predominant association between Mount Wutai and the number five (Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 134-138).

<sup>957</sup> However, it should be noted that organization of space and objects on a set of five is not unique with Mount Wutai. In discussing the concept of the “Five Sacred Peaks”, James Robson traced the rise in categories of “fives”. Robson pointed out that as early as the Warring States period (5th-third century BCE), the momentous transformation in spatial concepts had already took place with a shift from a cosmology based on the number four to one based on five. See James Robson 2009, 38.

<sup>958</sup> In addition to the five-syllable mantras, there were other kinds of Mañjuśrī mantras being circulated at the same time, which may have one, six or eight syllables (Ku Cheng-mei 2006, 30-40). Nevertheless, the “five-syllable” formula promoted by Amoghavajra and others was the most popular.

<sup>959</sup> T20n1173, produced by Vajrabodhi 金剛智 (d. 745 CE) in Kaiyuan 18 (730 CE).

<sup>960</sup> T20n1176, produced by Amoghavajra and collaborators in ca. 740 CE of the Kaiyuan Era.

<sup>961</sup> Raoul Birnbaum 1986; Lin Wei-cheng (Lin Wei-cheng 2014, 162-178).

peaked hair braids, reaffirming his association with the Five Peak celestial musician. This kind of depictions can be seen in esoteric Buddhist statues,<sup>962</sup> as well as the “compendiums of iconographic images (圖像抄)”.<sup>963</sup> (Figure 86)

Although extant examples bear later dates, the tradition of representing Mañjuśrī as Pañcaśikha was undoubtedly present by the mid-Tang. The earliest extant textual reference to Mañjuśrī’s embodiment as a “Five-braided Youth 五髻童子” was found in the aforementioned *Dharani of the Storehouse of the Dharma Treasure of the Mañjuśrī Sūtra*,<sup>964</sup> translated by Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (a.k.a. Jue’ai 覺愛; f.k.a. Dharmaruci 達摩流志; d. 727 CE) in Jinglong 景龍 4 (710 CE). The youthful Mañjuśrī with five peaked hair braids was also depicted in key esoteric Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Sūtra of the Empowered Supernatural Transformation of Great Vairocana Buddha’s Enlightenment* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經 translated by Śubhakarasiṃha 善無畏 (637-735 CE) and Yixing 一行 (683-727 CE) in Kaiyuan 開元 12 (724 CE).<sup>965</sup> However, the Buddhist “credentials” listed above were not in place until well after the mountain became famous.

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<sup>962</sup> This childlike incarnation of Mañjuśrī gained widespread currency with the prominent status of esoteric Buddhist tradition in Liao court during the 10th-12th centuries (Zhou Qi 2009, 158-211). It was also popular in Japan from the 13th century onward (Christine Guth Kanda 1979, 13).

<sup>963</sup> The compendiums were used by esoteric Buddhists that were to record “the correct methods for depicting in art, meditating on, and invoking the chief deities of the esoteric Buddhist pantheon. See Raoul Birnbaum 1986, 39.

<sup>964</sup> T20n1185b, 0804c, 0806a, and 0806c.

<sup>965</sup> T18n0848, 0008a and 0023c. In the Mount Qingliang Gazetteer tradition, this five-braided youthful Mañjuśrī was not mentioned in the *Ancient Record*, but in the *Expanded Record*, Yanyi was already quoting from Bodhiruci, as well as a lost text entitled *Biography of Mañjuśrī* 文殊傳, attributed to monk Haidong 海東 (d.u.), claiming that “the five peaks are the seats of the Maitreyas of the five directions, and the five braids on crown of the Bodhisattva [Mañjuśrī]” (T51n2099, 1104a).

In other words, they were retrospective means for consolidating the identity of Wutaishan .



## APPENDIX B: THE *BUILDING STANDARDS* AND FOGUANGSI

*Yingzao fashi* 營造法式, or the *Building Standards*, was first issued in Chongning 崇寧 2 (1103 CE) during the Northern Song period.<sup>966</sup> As one of the two extant full-scale, imperial-commissioned building manuals in Chinese architectural literature, its importance cannot be understated. Liang Ssu-ch'eng has praised the text as one of the two “grammar books” needed to unlock the mystery of pre-modern Chinese architecture,<sup>967</sup> and its discovery is seen as the starting point for the field of Chinese Architecture History.<sup>968</sup> However, it is important to point out that the *Building Standards* is not just a guidebook or manual. Both the “*fa* 法” and the “*shi* 式” as used in the title have specific technical meanings during the Song dynasty, the former denoted organized, integrated bodies of rules on a particular topic and the latter term was also used to refer to a certain type of legal rule.<sup>969</sup> The *Building Standards* was only one of a large number of collections

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<sup>966</sup> According the preface of *Building Standards*, colophons extant in received versions, evidence of carvers' name copied down on the page-seams and substituted characters used to avoid tabooed names of emperors, scholars have generally concluded that the text was reprinted at least three times during Song dynasty, first in Chongning era, and then in Shaoxing 紹興 (1131-1162 CE) and Shaoding 紹定 (1228-1233 CE) eras respectively. Both of the two later reprints involved, entirely or partially, recarving of printing blocks. Examination of bibliographies in official dynastic histories, private bibliographies and other accounts reveals that, fragmentary Song prints were still extant in the imperial and private collection during Ming dynasty. Direct copies were also produced based on Song prints. However, except some fragments, none of the Song prints or their direct copies is fully extant today. Complete copies of the *Building Standards* available to scholars are all Qing dynasty indirect copies and modern reproductions, with the most commonly cited ones being the “Ding-version 丁本”, the “Gugong-version 故宮本” and the “Siku-version 四庫本 (especially the Wenyan'ge 文淵閣 edition)”.

<sup>967</sup> Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1945, reprinted in 2001, p. 295-301.

<sup>968</sup> For a comprehensive review of the historiography of the study of *Building Standards*, see Cheng Li 2009. For a brief English introduction, see Feng Jiren 2006, 3-10; id. 2012, 1-13. For the initial study in larger social and historical background, see Li Shiqiao 2003, 470-489.

<sup>969</sup> Brian E. McKnight 1982, 323-331. McKnight listed 19 *shi*, for instance, the 130-fascicle *Clauses and Specifications of Storehouses Affairs of the Various Offices at the Capital* 在京諸司庫務條式 issued in

of *fa* and *shi* compiled following the effort to reform led by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086 CE) to systematize the whole government apparatus and cut down expenses.<sup>970</sup> Although no earlier texts of similar nature is still extant, imperial-commissioned building codes were known from an early time.<sup>971</sup>

It is important to note that the chief compiler of the *Building Standards*, Li Jie 李誠 (d. 1110 CE), based the text on “old treatises” in addition to gathering the advice from craftsmen:

His vassal examined and read through previous treatises and regulations, investigated and referred to the wisdom of fellow craftsmen.

乃詔百工之事。更資千慮之愚。臣攷閱舊章。稽參眾智。<sup>972</sup>

His vassal had examined classics, histories, and a variety of books, and also required explications from craftsmen item by item, in order to carefully edit and widely distribute the *Building Standards*.

臣考究經史羣書。並勒人匠逐一講說。編修海行營造法式。<sup>973</sup>

The complex sources that informed the *Building Standards* have made the text not only an important treatise for the study of the building practices of the contemporary Song dynasty, but also a window into understanding earlier architectural traditions as well, including the

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Zhiping 治平 2 (1065 CE), to illustrate that the *Building Standards* should not be seen as a unique work concerned with architecture, but as one of a whole sequence of works in which the *shi* concerning various subjects were compiled.

<sup>970</sup> Else Glahn, among others, has argued that the main goals of the *Building Standards* is to standardize the building process down to the tiniest construction members and makes it possible to use timber cut and dried beforehand with a minimum waste of material and labor (Else Glahn 1975, 235-236).

<sup>971</sup> It can be inferred from the “Memorial 劄子” attached to the text that at least preceding the *Building Standards* there was an imperial code with the same title, commissioned in Xining 熙寧 era (1068-1077 CE) and finished in Yuanyou 元祐 6 (1091 CE).

<sup>972</sup> “Preface for the Ingoing Building Standards 新進營造法式序”, in *Building Standards* (S82), f1.

<sup>973</sup> “Memorial 劄子”, in *Building Standards* (S82), f1.

architecture of Foguangsi that was first built during the Tang dynasty. In this appendix, additional cases of extant imperial structures and official architectural regulations are analyzed and compared to the Foguangsi in contemplation of the convergence and divergence of the construction systems of these different polities.

## THE MODULAR SYSTEM

The text of the *Building Standards* has been celebrated for its rigorous use of a modular system, with measurements of all architectural components given in the modular unit of *caifen* (材分), which are relative in that their absolute quantity differs between grades, to be decided by the size of their *cai* modular respectively:

Absolute Measurement for Grade X (in traditional units)	=	Modular Measurement (in the modular unit of <i>caifen</i> ) × Value of <i>caifen</i> for Grade X
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For example, the text describes the length of melon arms as 62 *caifen*. Since 1 *caifen* equates to 6 *fēn* for Grade I buildings, and 3 *fēn* for Grade VIII in Northern Song dynasty measurements, the absolute measurement for the length of melon arms converts to 372 *fēn* (i.e. 3 *chi* 7 *cun* and 2 *fēn*) for Grade I and 186 *fēn* (i.e. 1 *chi* 8 *cun* and 6 *fēn*) for Grade VIII. It started to be confusing when the compiler decided to abbreviate *caifen* simply as *fēn* (分) — the same character was already used to designate a traditional measuring unit of *fēn* (分).<sup>974</sup> The conflict was resolved by the decision to avoid using “*fēn* (分)” character in the

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<sup>974</sup> In Chinese scholarship on traditional architecture, it has become a convention to use 分\* or 分° for the modular unit to distinguish the two.

treatise completely. When a measurement needs to be given in *fēn*, the unit will be implied, but never written out, that is, when a measurement is given without a unit, it was in *fēn*. Consequently, it was also declared that every *fēn* in the *Building Standards* refers to the modular unit:

When it comes to the heights and depths of buildings, the lengths of objects, the shapes of angles and curves, and the appropriate [applications] of rulers, compasses and ink-lines [in drafting], all shall use [the modular unit] *fēn*, defined by the [corresponding grade of] *cai* that it adopted, to conduct the measurement and production. <All [measurements in] 分 as in [the traditional units] *fēn* and *cun*, are given in numbers [only]. The 分 as [refers to the modular unit of] *caifen* should be read with the segmented pronunciation of *fú* and *wèn* [i.e. *fēn*]. The rest [of this text] follows [this rule].>

凡屋宇之高深，名物之短長，曲直舉折之勢，規矩繩墨之宜，皆以所用材之分，以為製度焉。凡分寸之分皆如字，材分之分音符問切，餘準此。

It is also important to note that the module, based on which the modular unit is derived, is defined by a component called “crosspiece (方栿)”:

*Cai* <It has three names, the first is called *zhang*, the second is called *cai*, and the third is called *fangheng*.>: The entire system of building constructions should use *cai* as the modular.

*Cai* has eight grades, which shall be adopted according to the large or small [sizes of the buildings].

*Qi*: [Its cross-section measures] 6 *fēn* in width and 4 *fēn* in thickness. A *zucai* is obtained by combining *cai* and *qi*. [...]

For each [grade], the exact measurement of the *fēn* [modular] was obtained by dividing the width of the [cross sections of] *cai* into 15 segments. The thickness [of the cross sections of *cai*] is 10 *fēn*.

材 其名有三。一曰章。二曰材。三曰方栿：凡構屋之製。皆以材為祖。

材有八等。度屋之大小因而用之。 [...]

契：廣六分。厚四分。材上加契者謂之足材。 [...]

各以其材之廣分為十五分。以十分為其厚。<sup>975</sup>

As the text has explained, a crosspieces is an alternative name for *cai* (材) or *zhang* (章). According to an established hierarchy for buildings, the size of a *cai* (材) module decreases in size from Grade I (highest) to Grade VIII (lowest). In other words, standard crosspieces used for different architectural projects are based on the status of the building, with the size of the standard crosspiece further defining the size of the modular unit of the building.

It is almost certain that the use of a modular system predated the treatise. In the aforementioned passage on constructing “quiescent chambers (靜室)”, written by Yang Xi (330-386 CE), the instruction of “use the same *cai* (取同種材)” has often been interpreted as a requirement about building materials. Nevertheless, it must have been referring to adopting a unified modular, albeit the system is much less sophisticated.<sup>976</sup> There is no doubt the building of Buddha Hall of Foguangsi implemented some kind of modular system as well. A standard crosspiece used at the Buddha Hall of the Foguangsi is about 21 cm × 30 cm in cross section, or about 6.9 *cun* × 9.9 *cun* in Tang measurements.<sup>977</sup> The standard *cai* module for the Buddha Hall is therefore 30 cm, and the modular unit *fèn* about 2 cm. The ratio of the *cai* cross section is very close to the 2:3 ideal, but the dimension exceeded beyond the highest grade prescribed by the *Building Standards*, which is 6 *cun* ×

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<sup>975</sup> *Building Standards* (S82), f4, 1b-3b.

<sup>976</sup> See note 570, and relevant discussions in section “From Metropolis to the Mountains: The Rise of Concentrative Dwellings” in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>977</sup> The measurements cited here are mainly based on measuring surveys conducted by the Tianjin University team, with a margin of error ca. 1-2 cm. For the discussion of the modular unit at the Buddha Hall, see Lü Zhou ed. 2011, 67-68 and 83. Lü has suggested that the column-top brackets and the intercolumnar brackets of the Buddha Hall may have used different modular units.

9 *cun* for Grade I.

As Fu Xi'nian has already pointed out, the ground plan of the Buddha Hall was also laid out with modular units. Among the seven frontal bays, the five bays at the center all measure 252 *fèn* in width. They were probably intended to be about 250 *fèn*, but two extra *fèn* were added to bring the width to exactly 17 *chi* in Tang measurements. The two end-bays measure 220 *fèn*. Fu also noticed that the height of all columns is 250 *fèn*, which could be regarded as the same with the width of central bays. At the same time, the depth of the front portico and the rear aisle are 220 *fèn*, the same with the width of the end bays. The distance between the second and the fourth rows of columns, which constitute the inner “column ring”, is 444 *fèn* measured at the foot of columns and 440 *fèn* measured at column tops, since the columns are placed to lean inward and toward the center (側腳). The 440 *fèn* column-top distance is exactly twice the width of the end bays.<sup>978</sup> (Figure 87)

Zhang Shiqing has pointed out that the application of standard crosspieces and “well ring” structures were already practiced in the architecture of the Hakuho 白鳳 era (673-686 CE) in Japan.<sup>979</sup> At the Golden Hall 金堂 of Hōryūji 法隆寺, atop the column top cap blocks and the single-layered bracket-sets, there are four layers of crosspieces of unified dimensions, running along the columns of the second story and the outer ring of

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<sup>978</sup> Fu Xi'nian 1998a, 234-244.

<sup>979</sup> Zhang Shiqing 1991, 49-51. With the help of carbon-14 and tree ring dating, researchers have reached the conclusion that the Golden Hall was rebuilt in the mid-seventh century. The central pillar of the Five-storied Pagoda yielded late-sixth century dating, which is generally older than other material used at the site, which has been proposed as reused timber, and not an accurate reflection of the date of the establishment of the building complex (Suzuki Kakishi 2008).

columns on the first story. These crosspieces are exactly the *cai* module of the Golden Hall, which measures about 21.6 cm (12 *fèn*) × 27.0 cm (15 *fèn*, or 1 *cai*) in sections, based on published data from renovation surveys in 1956 CE.<sup>980</sup> Therefore, the *fèn* modular unit is about 1.8 cm. Its bracketing is relatively simple. Both the two-storied core structure and the pent-roof<sup>981</sup> have only one set of brackets placed along the wall plane, together with one set of jutting brackets. The interior column-top brackets have an average cross section that measures the same as with the crosspieces. The length of the bracket-arms is precisely 75 *fèn*, or 5 *cai*. On the exterior, the jutting bracket-arms were carved out from two layers of crosspieces, but the joining seams conceal their sleek, cloud-shaped contours.

Concerning the choice of 27.0 cm<sup>982</sup> as 1 *cai*, since it was not based on the traditional “carpenter’s *chi* (曲尺)”, which equates to 30.3 cm and is said to be based on the Tang dynasty *chi*, Sekino Tadashi had suggested that it was based on the “Korean *chi* (Jp. 高麗尺)”.<sup>983</sup> The Korean *chi* uses a longer unit of 35.6 cm, said to have followed the Eastern Wei practice, and transmitted to Japan around the sixth century. When converted into Korean *chi*, the scales of the building plan seem to follow simple numbers most of the time, which was believed to have been used in design process. However, there are still odd numbers for the bay width, among others, that are hard to explain. Moreover, for timber components, the *cai* renders to a curious 0.75 Korean *chi*. Could the *cai* unit equates to the

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<sup>980</sup> The cross section corresponds to a 4:5 ratio, instead of the 2:3 ratio given in the *Building Standards*.

<sup>981</sup> Throughout this thesis, the term “pent-roof” is used to translate “*fujie* 副階” or “*hisashi* 庇”, not to be confused with the later-added “*makobisashi* 孙庇” structure.

<sup>982</sup> 26.95 cm to be more precise.

<sup>983</sup> For the problems concerning Korean *chi*, see Arai Hiroshi 1992, 100-111.

very unit of measurement? If we use the formula “1 *cai* = 1 *chi* = 27 cm”, both the bracketing members and layout measurements convert to whole members.

Arai Hiroshi has further tested the hypothesis on other measurements within the Hōryūji complex and yielded convincing results. A reconstructed 26.7 cm “ancient Korean *chi* (Jp. 古韓尺)” has been proposed, based on a survey of a number of Koguryō, Baekje, and Silla sites and structures, as well as extant buildings and foundation remains in Asuka and Hakuhō period Japan.<sup>984</sup> It was probably based on a Korean measurement transmitted into Japan earlier than the “Korean *chi*”. Note that the *chi* units used during the Northern Dynasties varied from 25 cm to 28 cm. In particular, the early period *chi* of the Northern Wei measured 27.8 cm. This range is very close to the reconstructed “ancient Korean *chi*”, and the *cai* unit of 27 cm *chi* used at Hōryūji. Indeed, Korean influences on the Japanese measuring system and building practices can be traced back further to the Northern Dynasties, with whom the Koguryō had remained friendly.<sup>985</sup>

## THE STRUCTURAL LAYOUT

As I explained in Chapter 4, the concept of “*jinxiang doudi cao* 金箱料底槽 (concentric layout)” described in the *Building Standards* is essential in understanding the layout of the Buddha Hall of Foguansi. However, since even the interpretation of the term itself has controversial subject, it is necessary to take a moment to explain and reexamine this concept. To start with, we shall first reconsider our readings of the diagrams of

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<sup>984</sup> Arai Hiroshi 1992, 96-99.

<sup>985</sup> Morris Rossabi, 1983, 320.



architectural layouts in the “*dipan fencao* (地盤分槽)” section of the *Building Standards* in general. (Figure 88) The notion of “*dipan*” as possibly related to ground plans or building layouts is quite intuitive. The somewhat confusing part is “*fencao*”, or dividing the “*cao* (槽)”. *Cao* has been previously believed to be a spatial unit and translated as “troughs”.<sup>986</sup> In the 1944-45 field report, Liang Ssu-ch’eng described the Buddha Hall as having “a ring of inner columns, which divided the interior space of the hall into inner-*cao* and outer-*cao* areas”.<sup>987</sup> It is clear that Liang then interpreted *cao* as a unit for subareas of a building’s interior, whose boundaries were enclosed by columns. This reading was maintained in Liang’s later writings, until being modified in the *Annotated Building Standards* 營造法式註釋, where he and the fellow authors revised the reading of *cao* as the “lengthwise axes formed by a row of bracket-sets, perpendicular to the direction in which brackets are projected out”,<sup>988</sup> in other words, the axes along which spatial partitions are divided.

This revised reading of *cao* as an axis instead of a spatial unit is now favored by most scholars,<sup>989</sup> and it seems to be a better fit in the context of the *Building Standards*. For example, *cao*-axes are seen as represented by the strips illustrated in the aforementioned

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<sup>986</sup> The usage of *cao* to designate a “container” (thus a partition unit) was common, for instance, as exemplified in the water-powered “Trough Mill (槽碓)” recorded in Ming dynasty *Comprehensive Treatise on Agricultural Administration* 農政全書 (S120), f18, 17b. Accordingly, *cao* has been translated as “trough” in English.

<sup>987</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1944, 18.

<sup>988</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1983, 101.

<sup>989</sup> The revised reading of “*cao*” is adopted by Guo Daiheng (Guo Daiheng ed. 2009, 672-673). It should be noted that, Chen Mingda published the first explicit definition of “*cao*” in his *Studies on the Major Carpentry System of the Building Standards* 營造法式大木作研究. However, like Liang’s initial understanding, Chen took it as referring to a spatial unit (Chen Mingda 1981). Pan Guxi compromised by designating “*cao*” with both interpretations (Pan Guxi 1981, 2)

diagrams, connecting black dots that denote the positioning of columns. Correspondingly, the “single-*cao* (單槽)” only depicted one such strip, and likewise, exactly two such strips appear in the layout called the “double-*cao* (雙槽)”. (Figure 88-3 and 88-4) In contrast, if *cao* was taken as a spatial unit, it would render the names of these two layouts illogical, since they have two and three spatial compartments respectively. Additionally, other terms such as “spanning across the *cao* (騎槽)” or “running parallel with the *cao* (壓槽)”, which are used to describe the directionality of bracket-sets and joists in reference to certain *cao*-axes, would not make sense either.<sup>990</sup> In accordance with the reading of *cao* as an axis, some see the multiple lines of stripes in the *Building Standards* diagrams as representations of structural frames that are composed of bracket-sets and multi-layered, piled-up joists. It has proposed that the layouts should be read as a plan view seen at a position above the bracket-layer. Therefore, it has been argued that *cao* is the space confined by these architectural members of the bracketing layer rather than conceptual axes without width and depth.<sup>991</sup>

These are appealing proposals, but they should be checked against several questions. First, if the lines perpendicular to the *cao*-axes are indeed representations of protruding bracket-arms or entire sets of brackets, the diagram shows at least two intercolumnar bracket-sets for each bay. In the diagram of “tripartite layouts (分心斗底槽)”, the number amounted to as many as three at certain places. (Figure 88-1) Using two

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<sup>990</sup> He Jianzhong 2003, 41-43.

<sup>991</sup> Zhu Yongchun 2006,

or even three intercolumnar bracket-sets throughout the architecture disagrees with the bracketing characteristics of architecture contemporary to the *Building Standards*. As evident in the text, which suggested to use at most two sets at the central bay and one set for the rest of the bays, intercolumnar bracket-sets were still developing in the Northern Song period. Secondly, these stripes are not used consistent in all the places covered by the bracketing structure. For instance, in the “concentric layout”, instead of forming a perfect 回-shape, the stripes run across the entire width of the core structure along the second row of columns to the front.<sup>992</sup> (Figure 88-2) Since this concentric structure should be symmetrical at the bracket-layer, and indeed, in the Foguangsi Buddha Hall, the second row of columns to the rear have joists and bracket-sets at both end bays as well, so there is no logical explanation for their absence in the representations. As a result, I argue that we must reconsider our previous understanding of *cao*.

The *dipan*-diagrams may be related to the spatial arrangements of buildings. However, I argue that they are not “architectural plans” in the modern sense. In contemporary literature of the Song dynasty, “*dipan*” was used in relation to the laying of foundation of a building project. For example, in the *Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu* 朱子語類, compiled in the Southern Song period, when asked about the significance of the treatise of the *Great Learning* 大學, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200 CE) replied: “The *Great Learning* determines the scheme and the scope of the groundwork for

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<sup>992</sup> The author would like to thank Prof. Ding Yao, Prof. Chen Tao, and Prof. Zhang Shiqing for sharing this observation.

self-cultivation and the governance of men. It is analogical to those who are erecting a house. [They] must first pound a foundation (打個地盤). When the foundation is made, then it will take off from there.”<sup>993</sup> Taking into account that “*dipan*” was essentially concerned with the foundation of a building, “*fencao*” may in fact refer to the layout of strips of footings constructed under rows of columns or walls. A closer examination of the *Building Standards* shows that in addition to modest platforms made with a pounded soil and gravel core and thin facing layers of stone or brick, the method of spread footings was also included. In the Qing dynasty Ministry of Works’ *Construction Methods*, the method of spread footing was commonly used in the basework of all building types, and the construction of footing was referred to as “*kaicao* (開槽)”, or digging the *cao*.

Accordingly, *cao* may be understood as the grooves for such footings.<sup>994</sup> It was recorded in the *Construction Methods* that “embankment walls (拦土)” are placed between column bases, and these low-wall footings would divide the foundation into multiple compartments, which are then filled with pounded earth.<sup>995</sup> It may not be a coincidence that the footing grooves widely in use to date are still called “*jicao* (基槽)” in modern

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<sup>993</sup> *Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu* (S92), f14.

<sup>994</sup> Outside the context of the *Building Standards*, the term “*cao*” may have been used in a more general sense. For instance, writing in the early ninth century CE, Duan Chengshi 段成式 (d. 863 CE) has described position of wall murals using terms such as “the north-facing [wall] of the inner *cao* (内槽北面)” and “the eastern wall of the inner *cao* (内槽东壁)”. See *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* 酉陽雜俎 (S142), f5. The Song dynasty compiled *Administrative Statutes of the Tang Dynasty* 唐會要 (S81), on the other hand, reported that the auspicious omen of a numinous jade mushroom (玉芝) measuring six *chi* in length growing on a “column of the inner *cao* (内槽柱)” of the Hall of Longevity and Prosperity 壽昌殿. The use of “inner *cao* (内槽)” to indicate the position of walls or columns may have been derived from its technical meaning that refers to the inner ring of footings beneath them.

<sup>995</sup> Liang Ssu-ch’eng 1981, 33-34.

Mandarin. This practice is comparable to the stylobate structure commonly seen in classical Greco-Roman and Indic architectural traditions, except that in the Chinese tradition, they are usually embedded into the pounded-earth and hidden below ground pavements.

Although pounding the entire foundation of a building with earth was widely practiced throughout history, the areas beneath columns were indeed treated with extra care to provide a firmer loadbearing base. Compared to the better-known tradition of using isolated underground column bases, constructing strips of foundations with timber, pounded earth, brick or stone, similar to the modern strip footing system, has received much less scholarly attention. In addition to possible precedents found in pre-historical or early Chinese architectural sites,<sup>996</sup> a more contemporary example was found at the Buddhist monastery of Zhaopengcheng 趙彭城佛寺 from the Northern Dynasties period, located in Linzhang 臨漳, Hebei province. The structure was located in the southwestern compound, presumably a Buddha hall, and was found with underground foundations in

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<sup>996</sup> The earliest known example may have been site no.2 at Erlitou 二里头, Yanshi 偃师, Henan province, whose construction dated back to 1700-1600 BCE. Here the remaining platform of the main structure rises about 20 cm above the ground level of the courtyard. Footing grooves that are 75 cm wide reached 75-110 cm below the current surface level of the platform, and were used as its foundation. Timber crossties that measures 29 cm and 15 cm in section were placed in the grooves to support the columns. Columns were arranged at a roughly 100 cm interval and each was buried 60 cm in depth. Another application of the strip footing system was seen in the remains of a palatial compound located in Guangzhou 廣州, Guangdong province, constructed around 330-150 BCE by C-14 dating, believed to be constructed by the Prince of Nanyue 南越王. The partial excavation revealed base-wood joists that are 60-75 cm wide and 15-17 cm thick, placed on timber crossties. Remains of wooden columns are joined with the base-wood joists by mortise and tenon.

strips of pounded earth, whose layout corresponds with that of the column grid.<sup>997</sup>

Brick and stone footings were used at site no. 37 of the Jiuchenggong 九成宮 of the Tang dynasty, renovated and rebuilt on the former Renshougong 仁壽宮 of the Sui dynasty at Linyou 麟遊, Shaanxi province. According to the excavation report, the entire foundation measures 2.30 m in height, with 1.3 m below ground level. The columns bases, floor joists and door saddles encircling the five-bay core space were placed on top of a ring of 65-70 cm wide footing laid with two rows of brick side by side, embedded 17 cm into pounded-earth.<sup>998</sup> (Figure 89) At a later and more modest building site dated to the Five Dynasties period, the Biyunsi 碧雲寺 in Zhangzi 長子, Shanxi province,<sup>999</sup> a recent renovation has made it possible to examine the structure of its basework. Strips of footing at the main hall were laid with bricks then lined with stone slabs on both sides, placed on top of a high platform. An inscription discovered on the basework structure expressed the wish that by using these “red stones (赤石)”, the “footing structure (礧腳)” would be soundly built.<sup>1000</sup>

Seen in this light, it is possible that the strips in the “*dipan fencao* (地盤分槽)”

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<sup>997</sup> Yecheng Kaogudui 2010, 31-42.

<sup>998</sup> Zhongguo Kexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2008. In addition, at a later ditch where excavators conducted re-cutting a survey of the foundation, a roughly processed sandstone slab whose section measures 160 cm in width and 60 cm in height was seen placed 110 cm directly below column base no.2. The slab was embedded in the foundation, separated from the column base by 13 layers of pounded earth, and it is clear that both members were intentionally set in place during the basework of the building. The stone slab was tentatively named “column base supporting stone (承礎石)”, which may have been a precedent the kind of “base-stone joists (襯石方)” described in the *Building Standards*. Similar slabs were also reported in the excavation of the Linde Hall 麟德殿 at the Daming Palace 大明宮 in Chang’an.

<sup>999</sup> He Dalong 2008.

<sup>1000</sup> “*Kenjiao* (礧腳)” may be related to the “*zhuojiao* (鋌腳)” structure recorded in the *Building Standards*.

diagrams in the *Building Standards* are used to show the arrangement of footings in building foundations, with intersected lines representing seams between laid stones or bricks. Such a practice was also observed in contemporary Japanese architecture, such as the Yamadadera 山田寺, whose architectural ruins from the seventh century lies in Sakurai 桜井, Nara, Japan.<sup>1001</sup> (Figure 90) This alternative interpretation could also help us better understand “concentric layouts”. It provides an explanation for the asymmetrical form of the plan. Along the second row of columns to the front, footings are placed across the width of the entire building to support the weight of walls and fenestrations. Since the second row to the rear is interior columns, and enclosure was only designed to ring the space of the inner core, footings are not needed at the end bays. Therefore, the original design of the Buddha Hall at the Foguangsi with its open front portico was in fact an exact embodiment of the “concentric layouts” illustrate in the *Building Standards*.

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<sup>1001</sup> Hakozaiki Kazuhisa 2012.

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Figure 60 Nunnery of the Sweet Dewdrops at Taining, Fujian province; original structures dated to the Southern Song dynasty; present structures rebuilt after fire damage (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)

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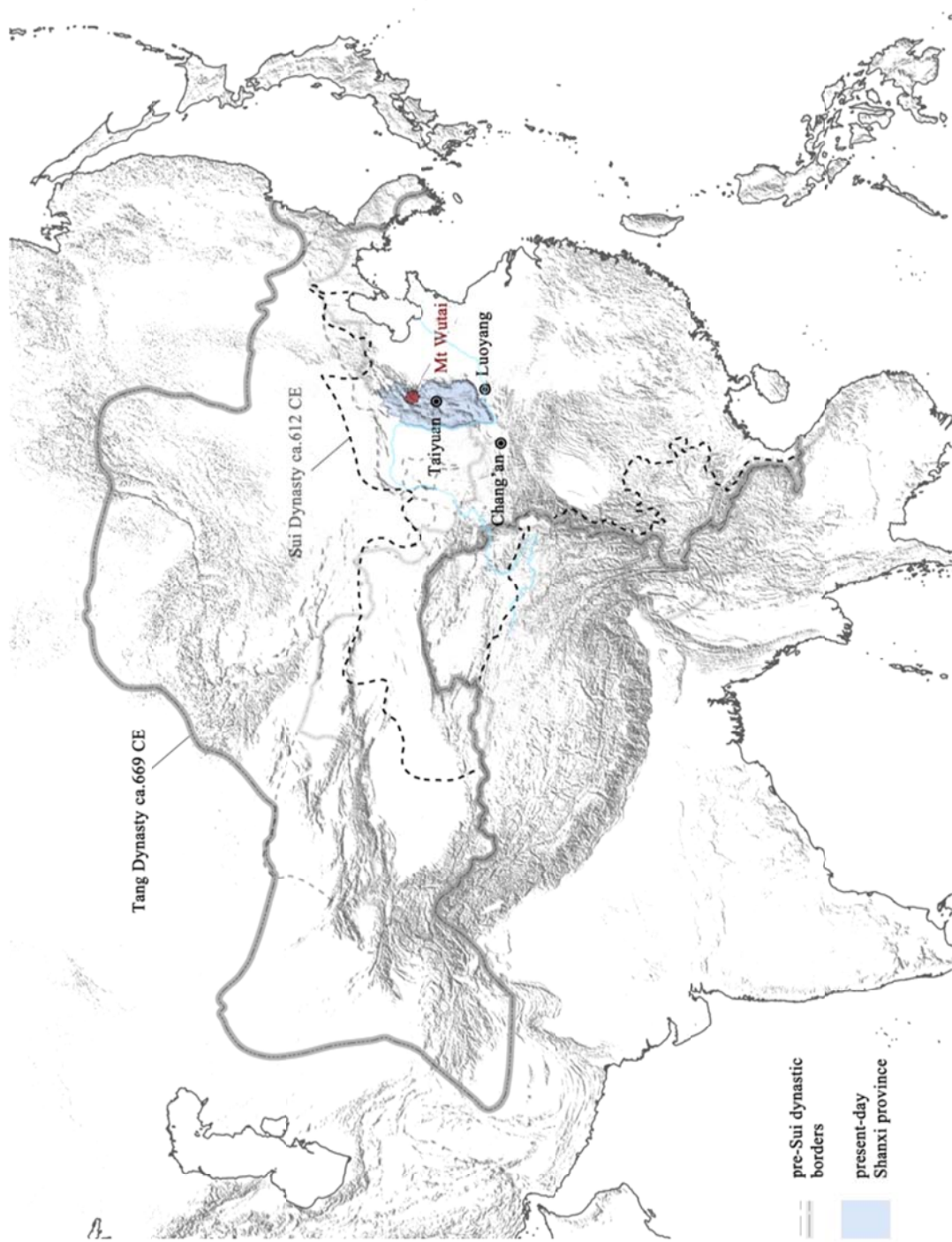
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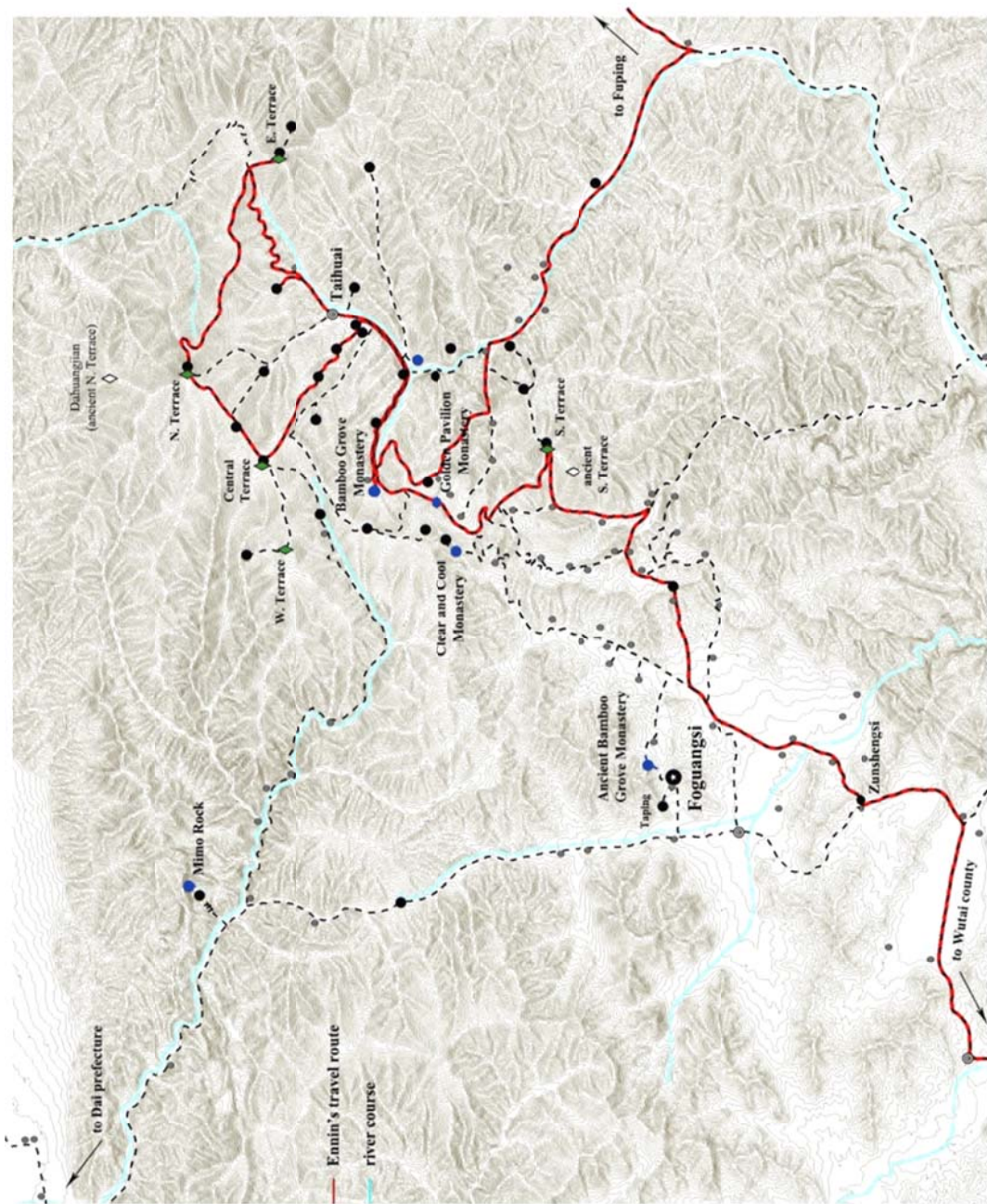


Map 1. Map of China



Map 2. Map of Shanxi





Map 3 Mount Wutai Area (made after a draft map drawn by Li Jingyang)



Figure 1 Top: General view of the Taihuai area of Mount Wutai in early 20th century (from Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1928a, vol.5, plate V-4); Bottom: Distant view of Foguangsi situated outside the Southern Range of Mount Wutai



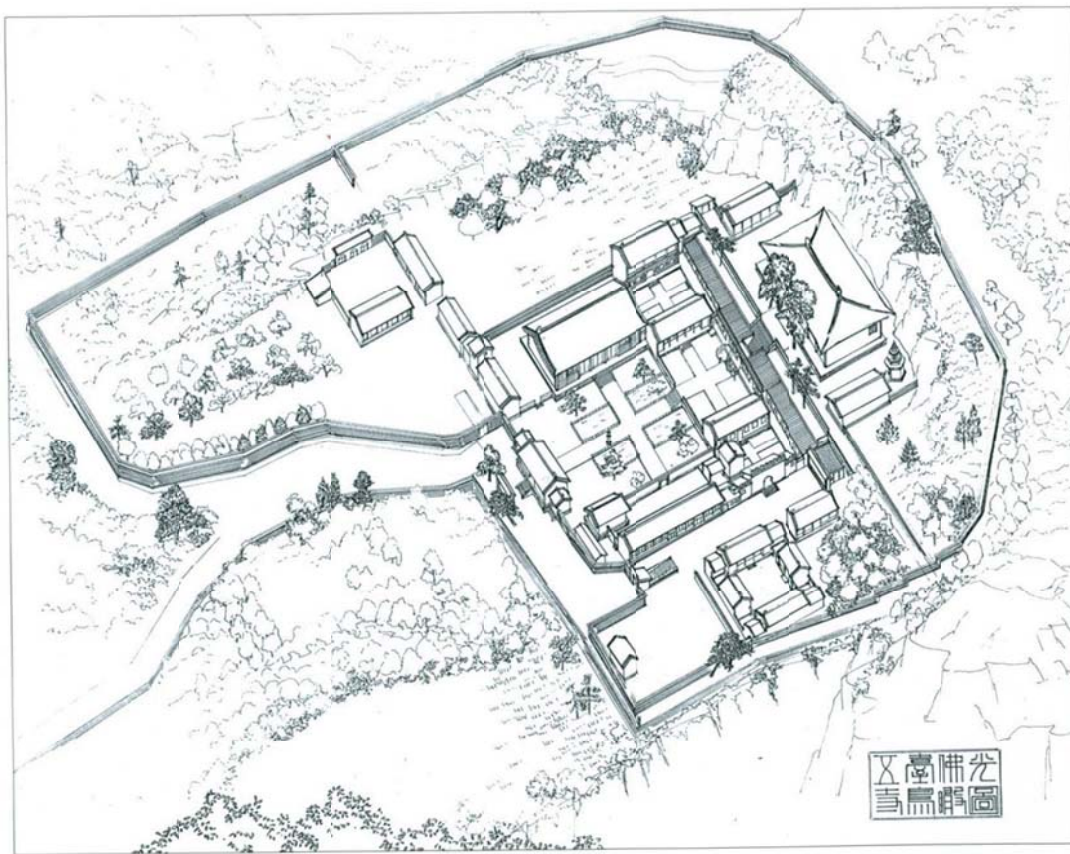


Figure 2 Foguangsi, Mount Wutai; Top: current layout of the Foguangsi complex (drawn by Shanxi Sheng Gujian Yanjiusuo); Bottom: Aerial Photos of Foguangsi today (courtesy of Zhu Ruolin)

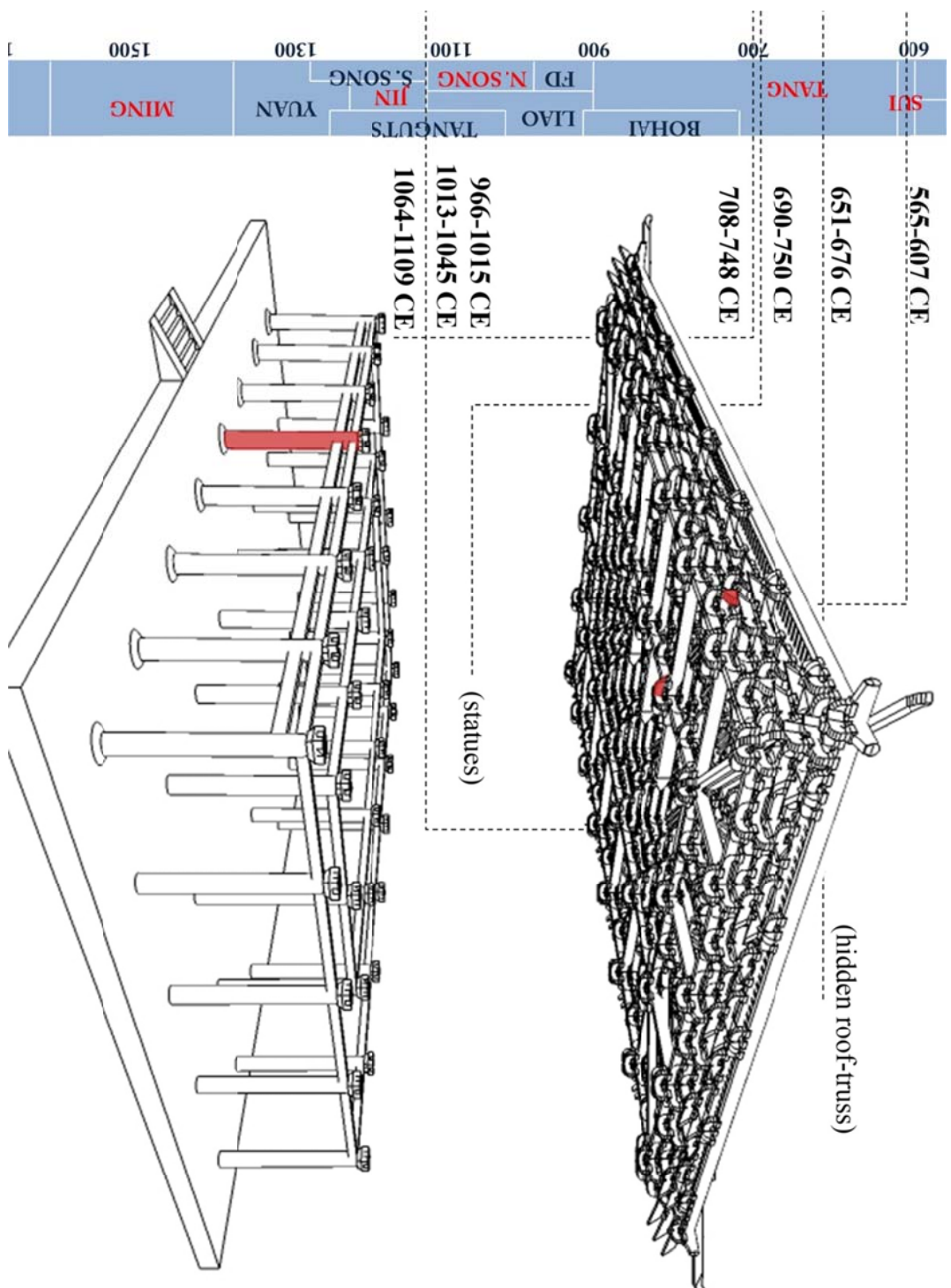


Figure 3 Dendrochronology and carbon-14 dating results of 13 samples collected at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, 2012-2014





Figure 4 The Patriarch Pagoda of Foguangsi



IV. 1	III. 1	II	I.1
IV. 2	III. 2		I.2

Figure 5 Ink inscriptions written on the bottom of the four-rafter beams of the Buddha Hall at Foguangsi



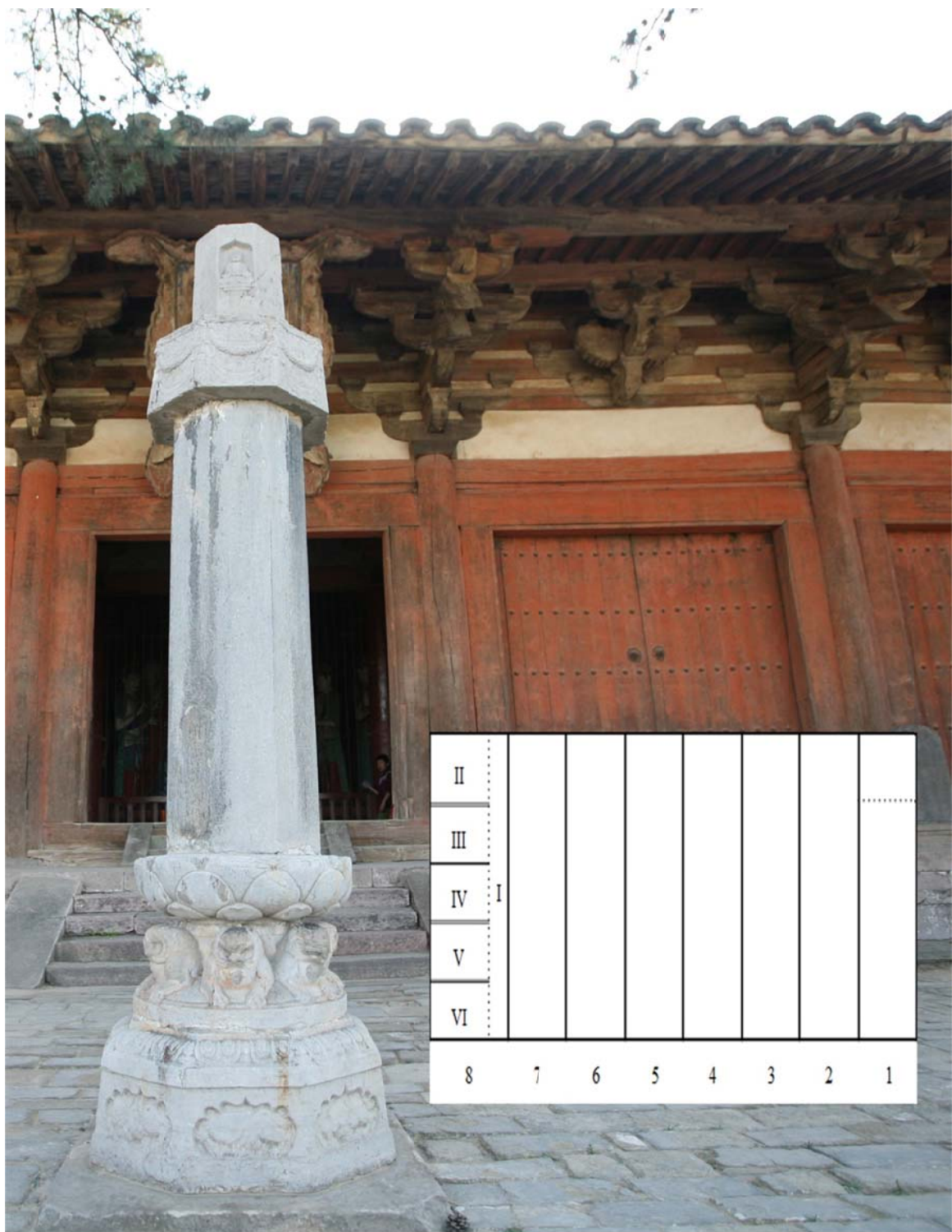


Figure 6 Sūtra-Pillar standing in front of the Buddha Hall at Foguangsi



Figure 7 Woodblock print of Mañjuśrī, Pel.chin.4514(2)1 (Collection of the National Library of France)



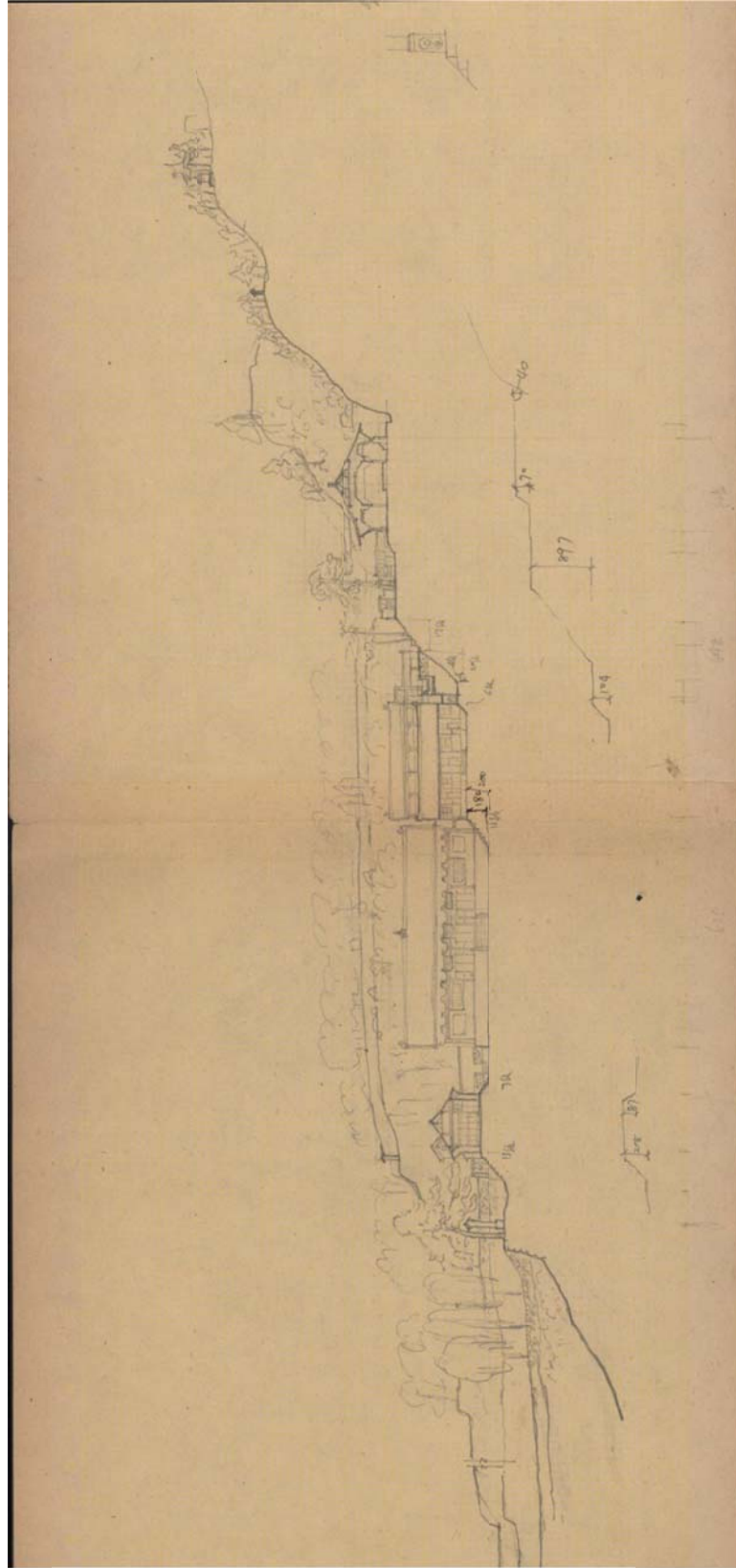


Figure 8 Sketch drawing of the cross-section of Foguangsi complex (made by Qi Yingtao and Li Zhujun in 1972)



Figure 9 Early cave architecture at the Barābar Hills, Bihar, India; dated to 3rd-2nd c. BCE by inscription (photo by Michael W. Meister)





Figure 10 Cave shrine at Udayagiri near Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, India, with central altar and icon directly carved out of the rock of the mountain site; dated to ca. 5th c. CE

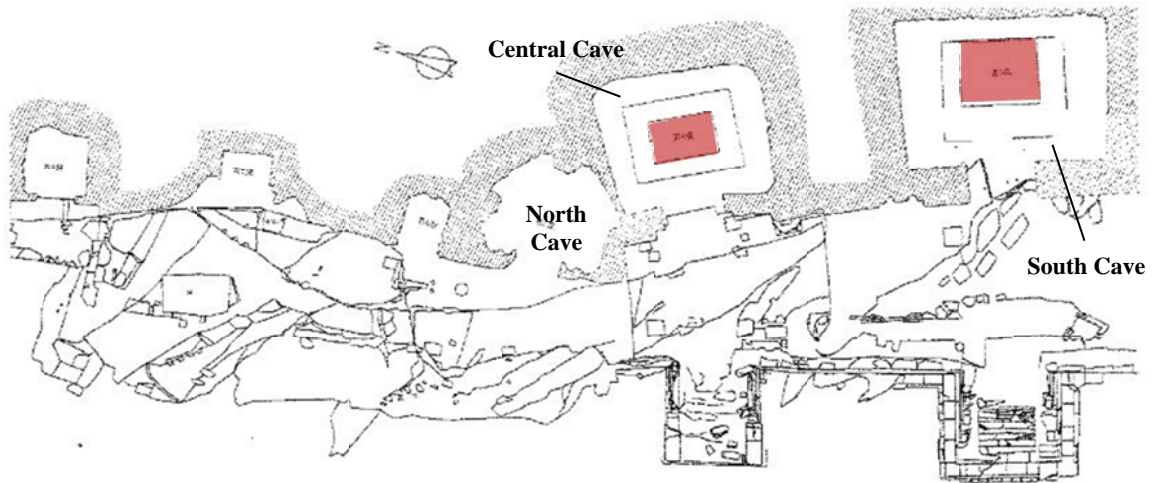


Figure 11 Leigutai Caves at Longmen Grotto, near Luoyang; commissioned during Empress Wu's reign (after Li Chongfeng 2014b)

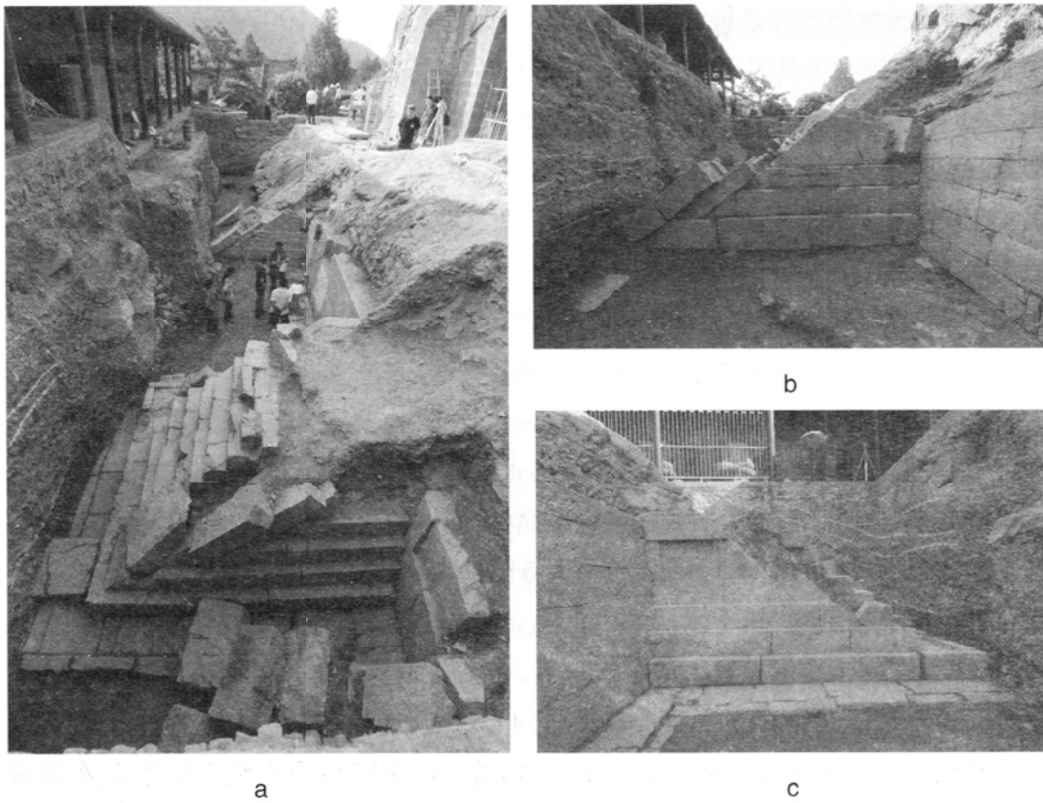


Figure 12 The landscaping of the high platforms of Leigutai Caves (Li Chongfeng 2014b)

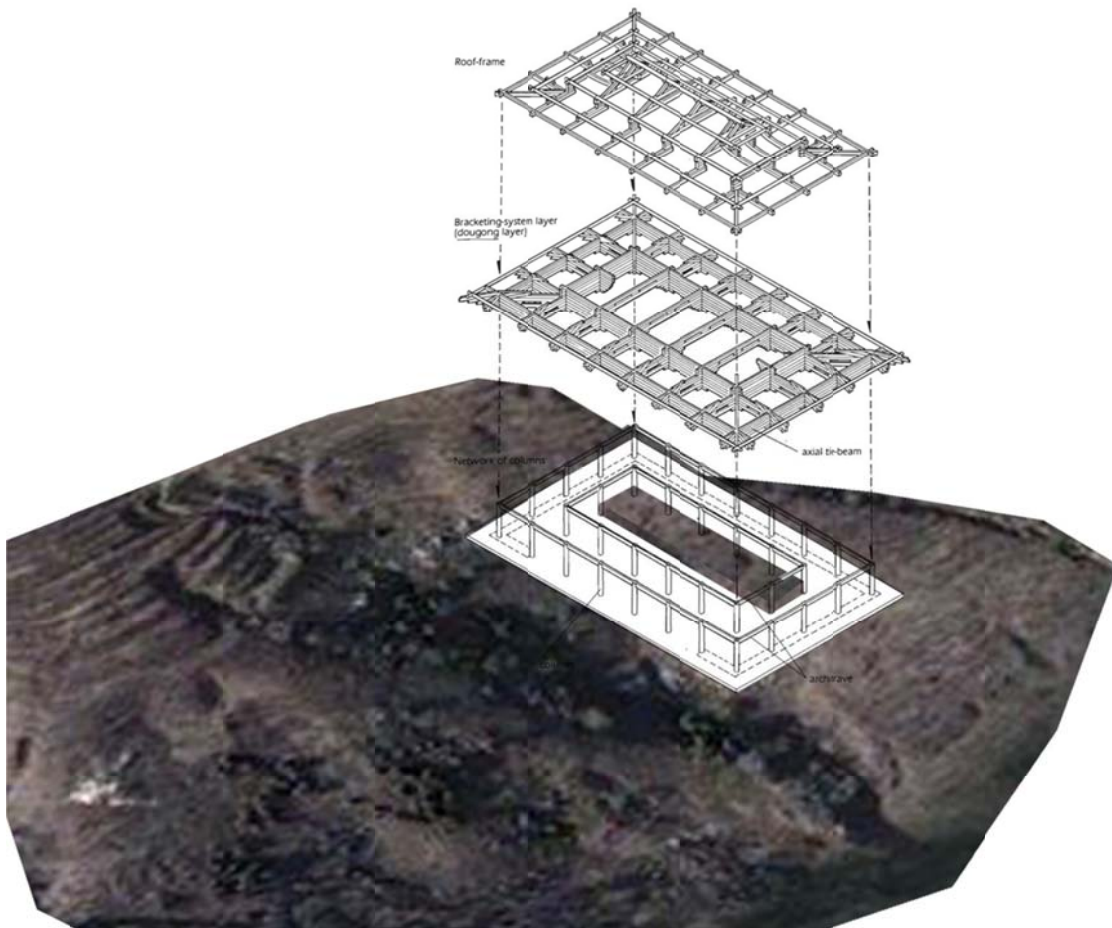


Figure 13 The design of Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, with fully timber-framed structure while retaining the essential element of a rock-cut altar



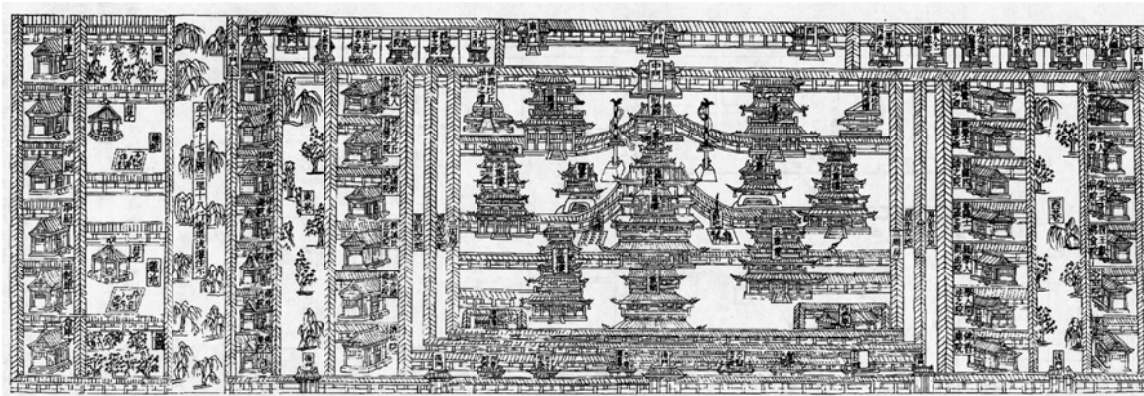


Figure 47 *Illustrated Scripture of the Jetavana Monastery in the Śrāvastī Kingdom in Central India* showcases the ideal Buddhist architecture of the Tang dynasty

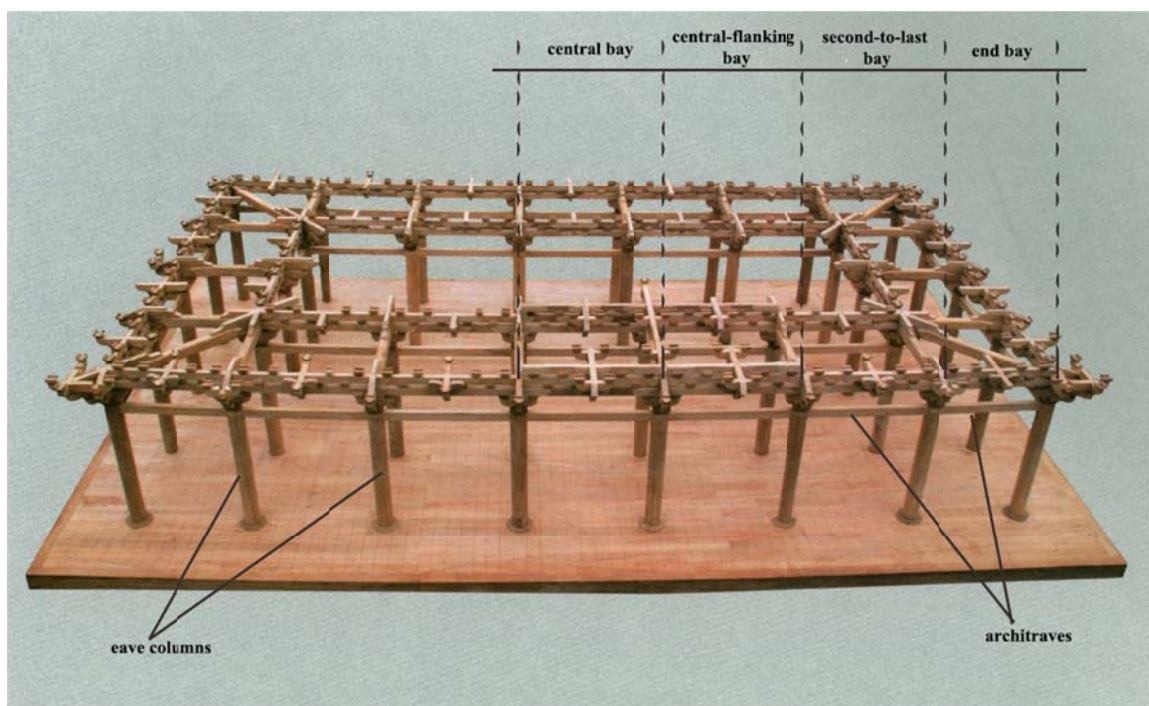


Figure 48 Model showing the two rings of columns employed at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi (from Qi Weizheng 2012)



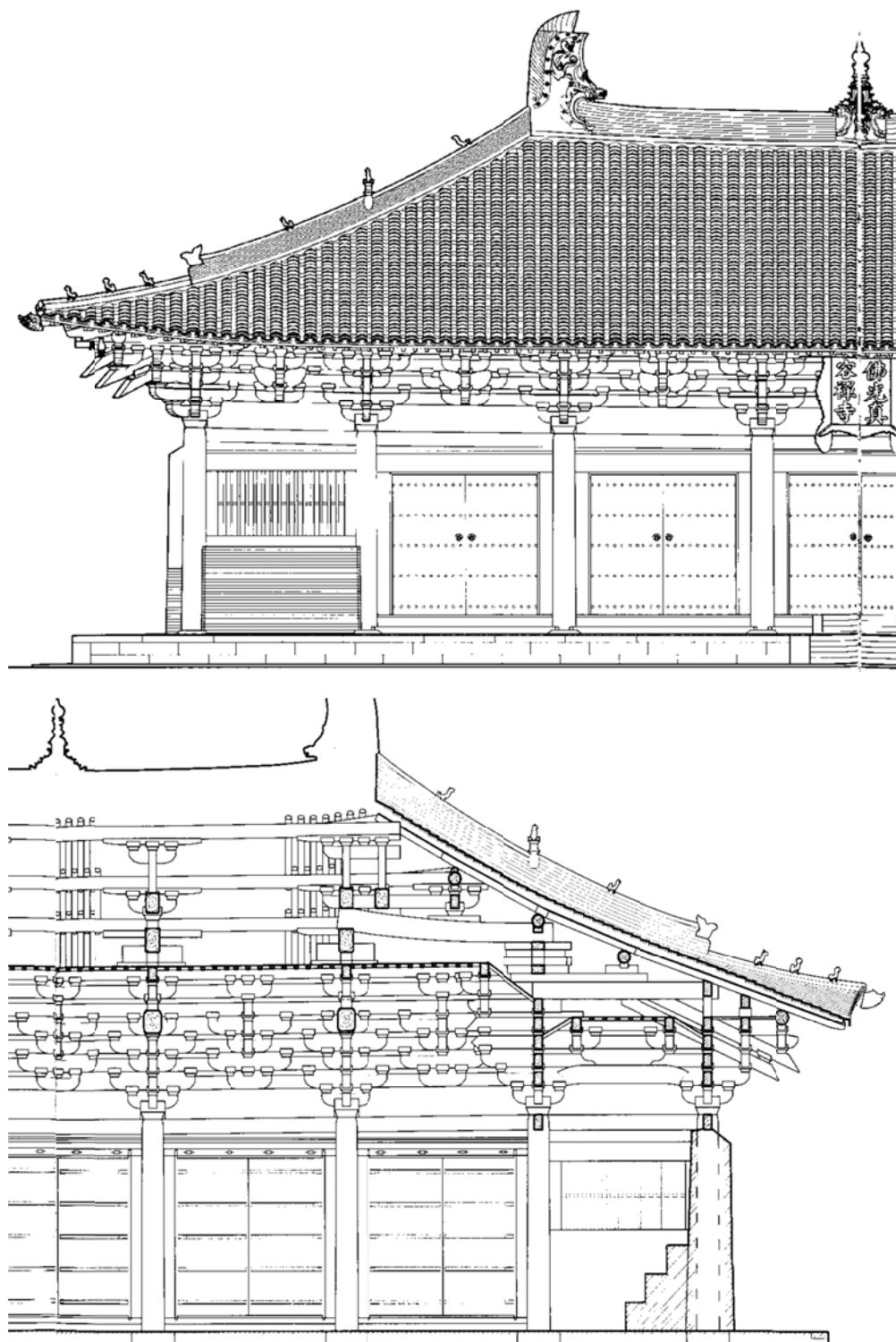


Figure 49 The plank doors of the Buddha Hall, Foguangsi

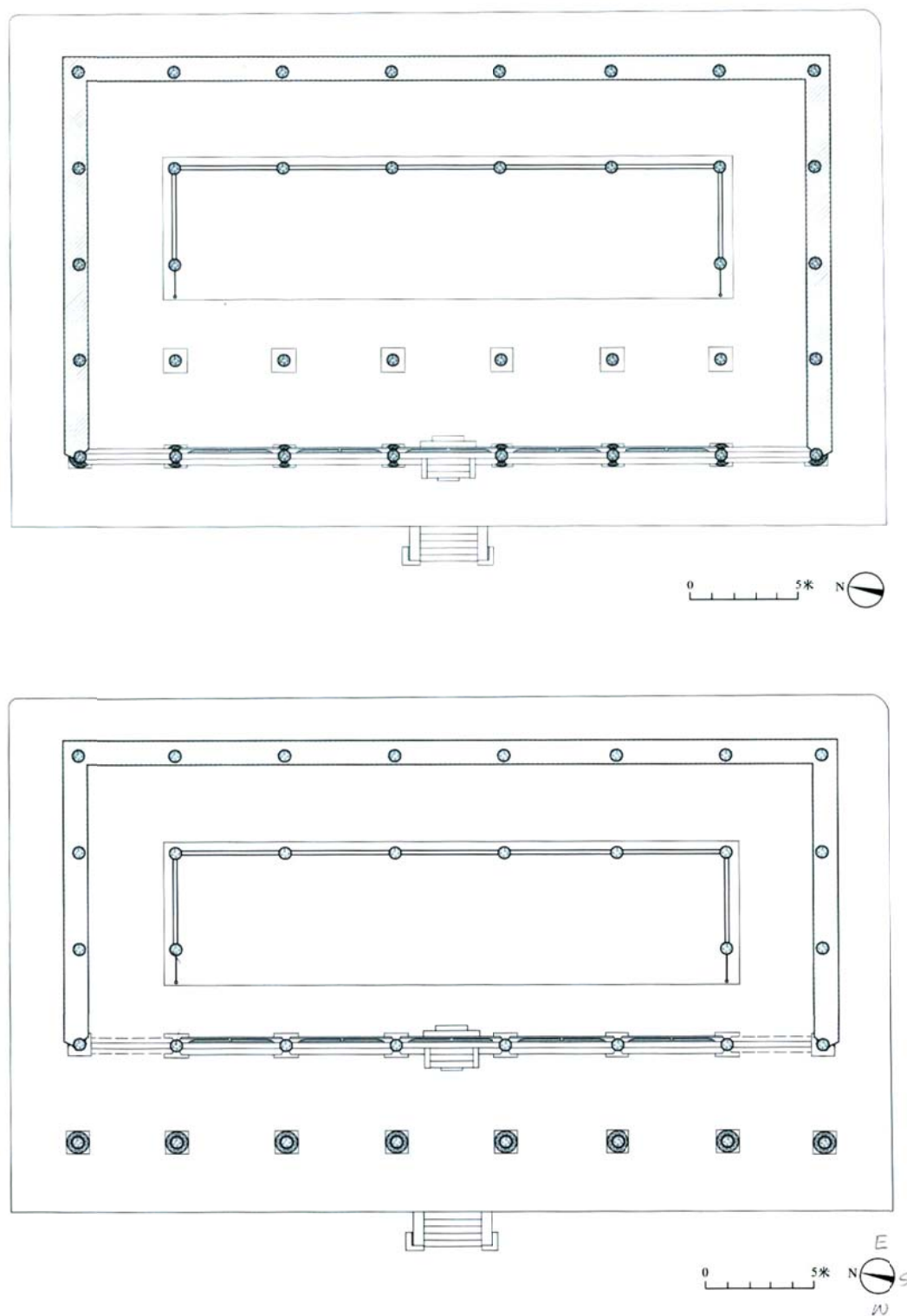


Figure 50 Current and reconstructed plans of the Buddha Hall at Foguangsi

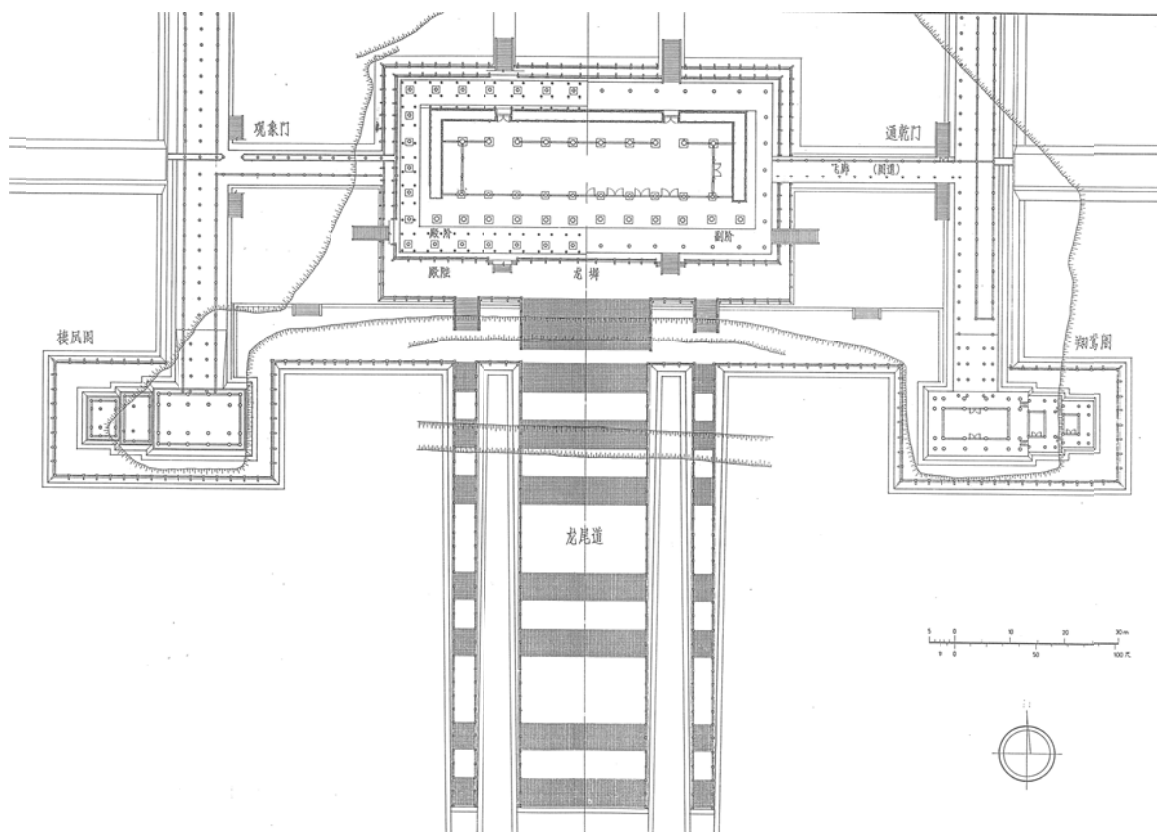


Figure 51 Reconstructed plan of the Hanyuan Hall, Daming Palace of the Tang (modified after Fu Xi'nian 1973, 1998b, and Yang Hongxun 2001)



hanging curtains

lattice screens

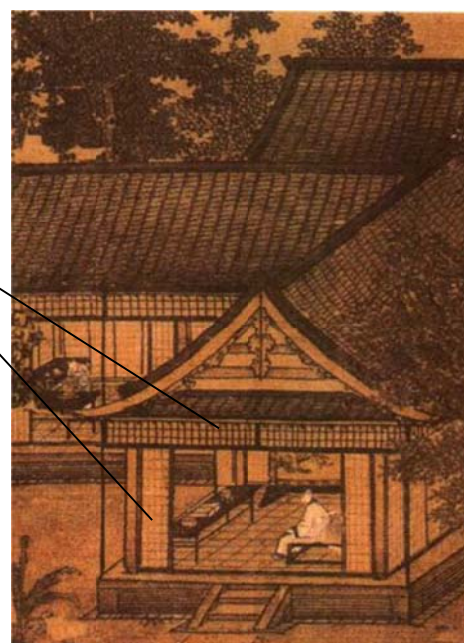


Figure 52 Images of architecture with colonnaded façades and hanging curtains

Figure 53 Post-Tang buildings using lattice screens on building exteriors

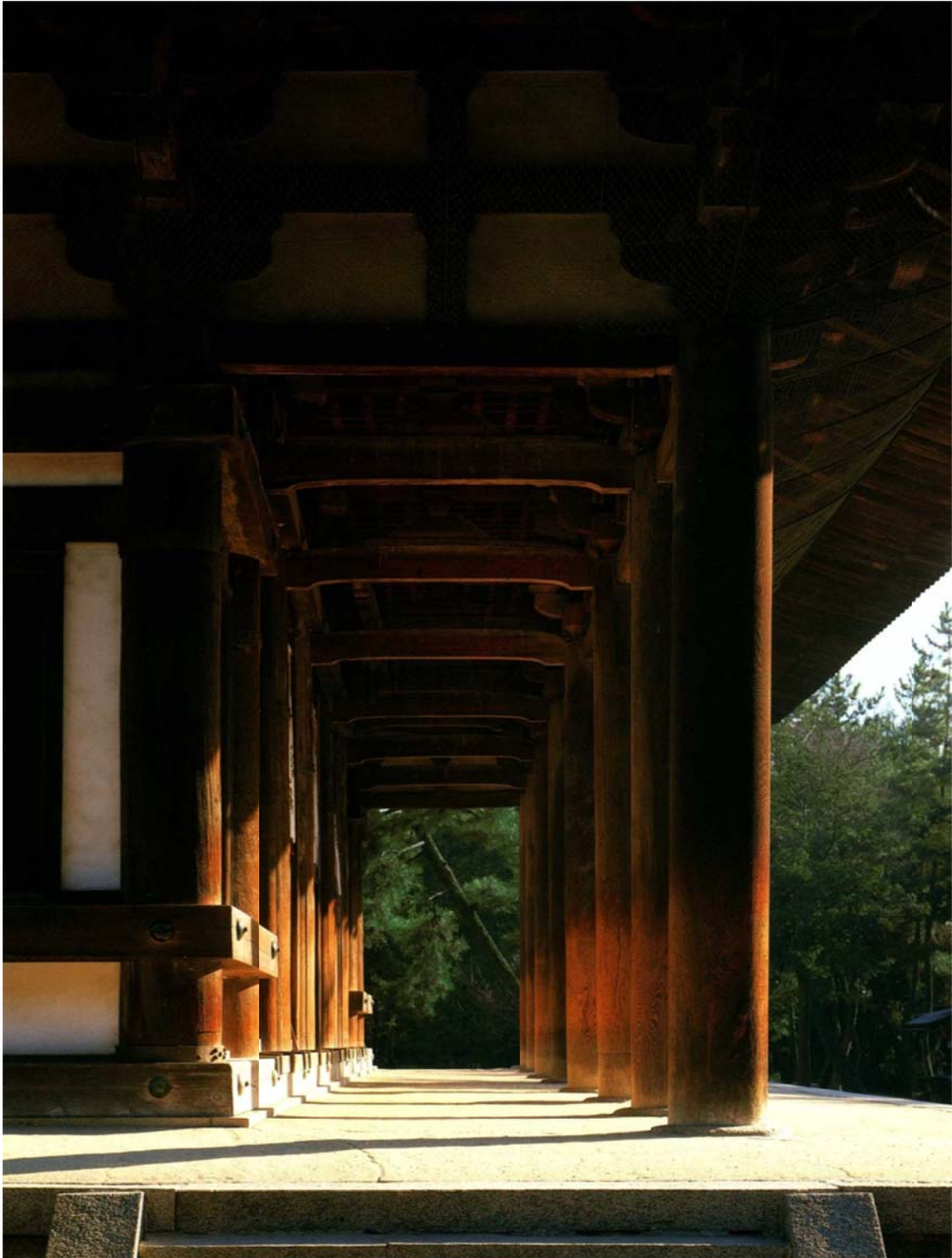


Figure 54 The front portico of the Golden Hall at Tōshōdaiji, Nara



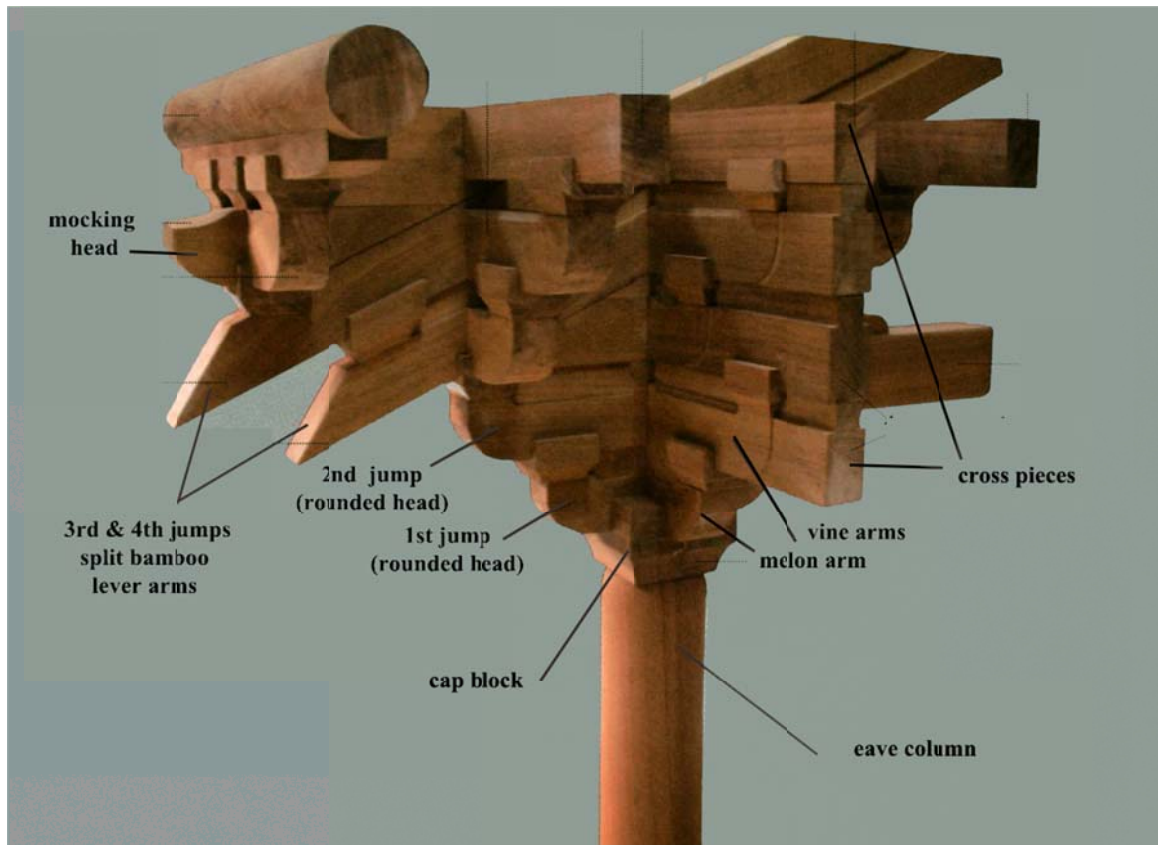


Figure 55 Column-top bracketing of the Buddha Hall, Foguangsi (from Qi Weizheng 2012)

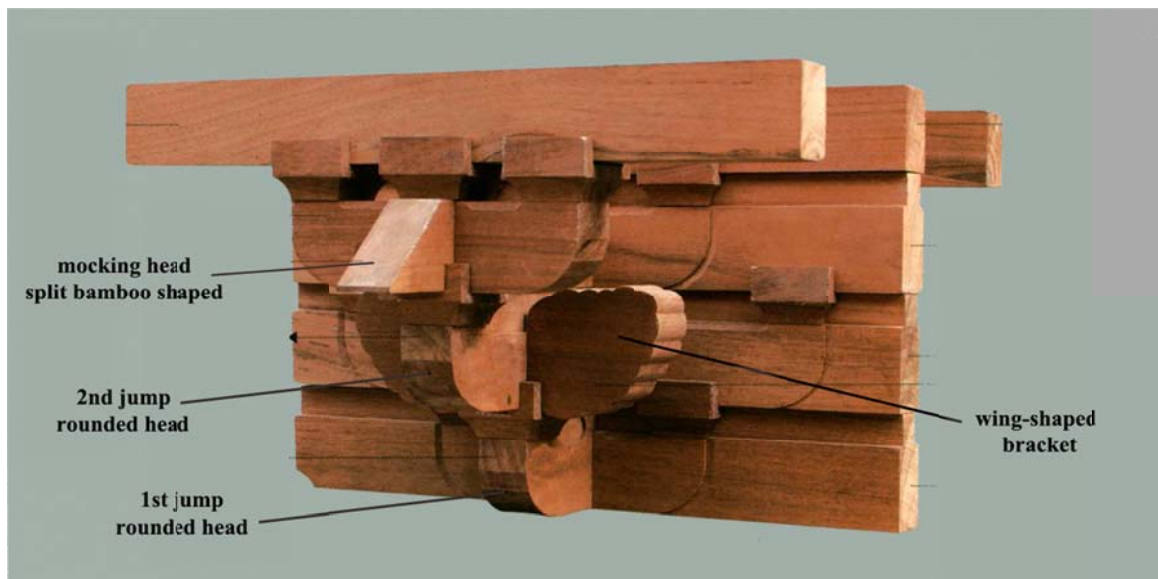


Figure 56 Intercolumnar bracketing of the Buddha Hall, Foguangsi (from Qi Weizheng 2012)

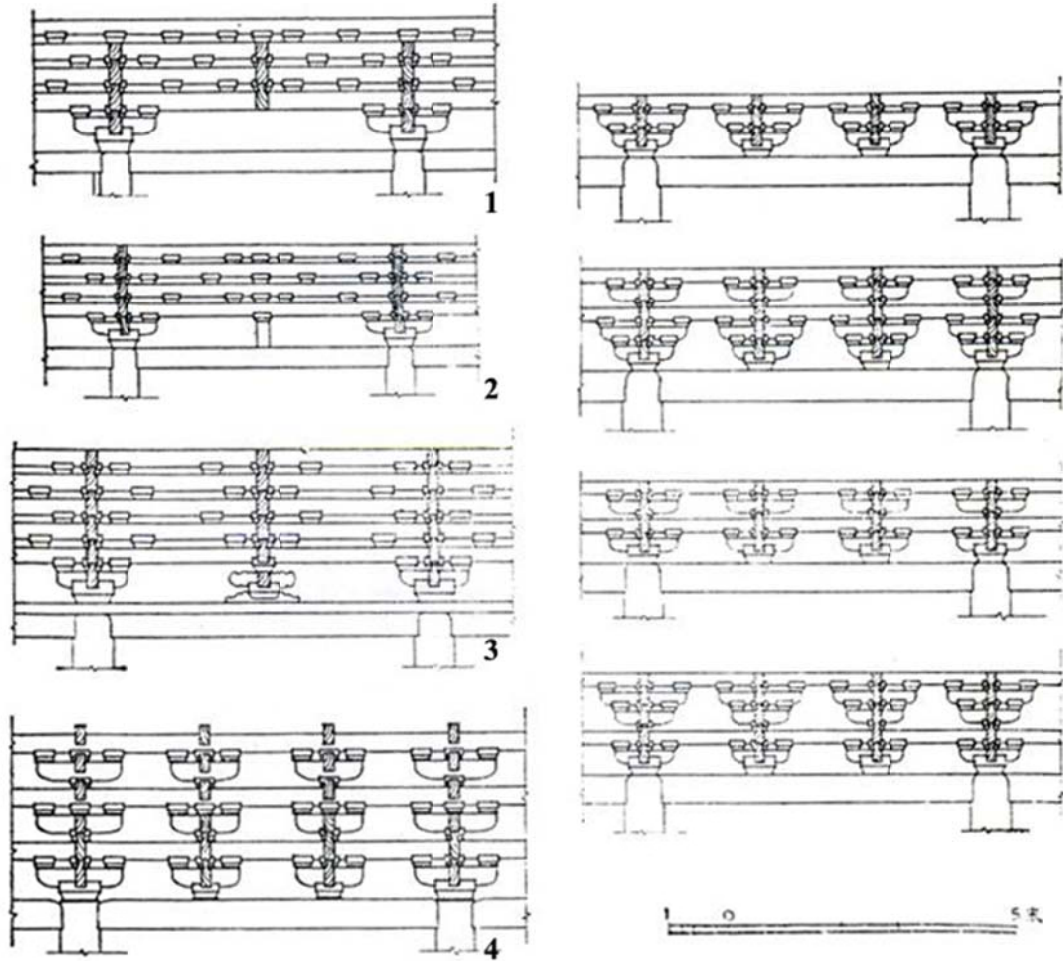


Figure 57 Different visual impacts of bracket-layers vs. bracket-sets (after Chen Mingda 1990); Left: 1 Foguangsi, Wutai; 2 Dulesi (lower story), Ji county ; 3 Fengguosi, Xi county; 4 Hualinsi, Fuzhou; Right: bracket-set forms prescribed by the *Buildings Standards*

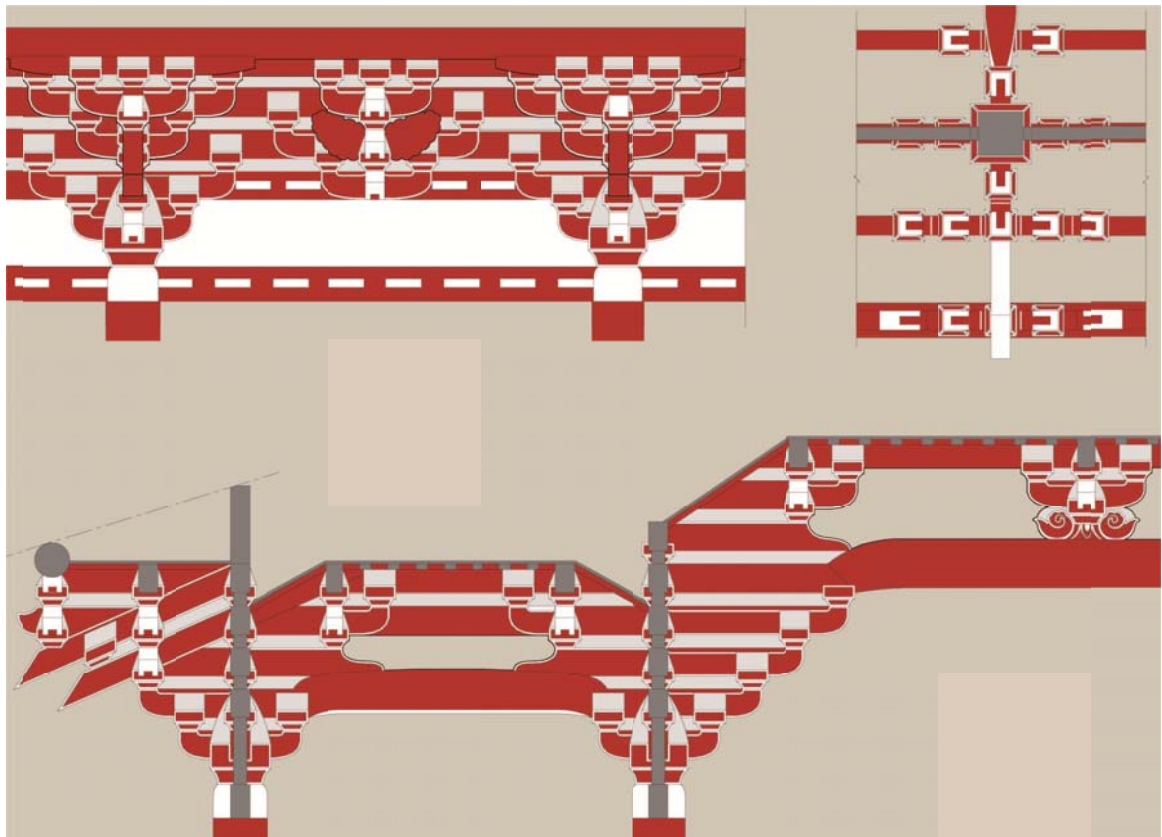
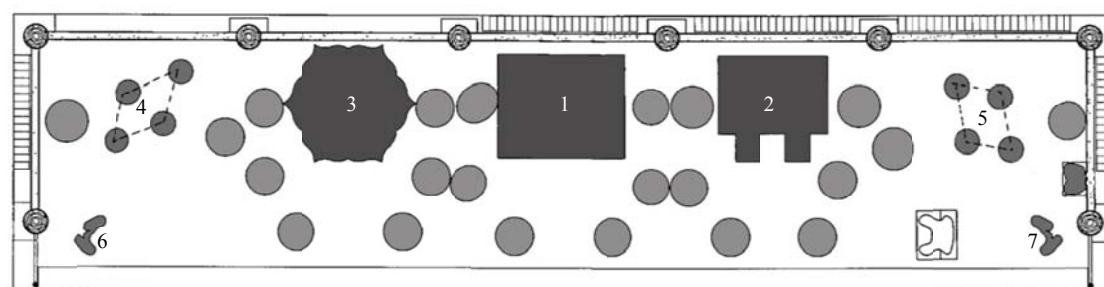
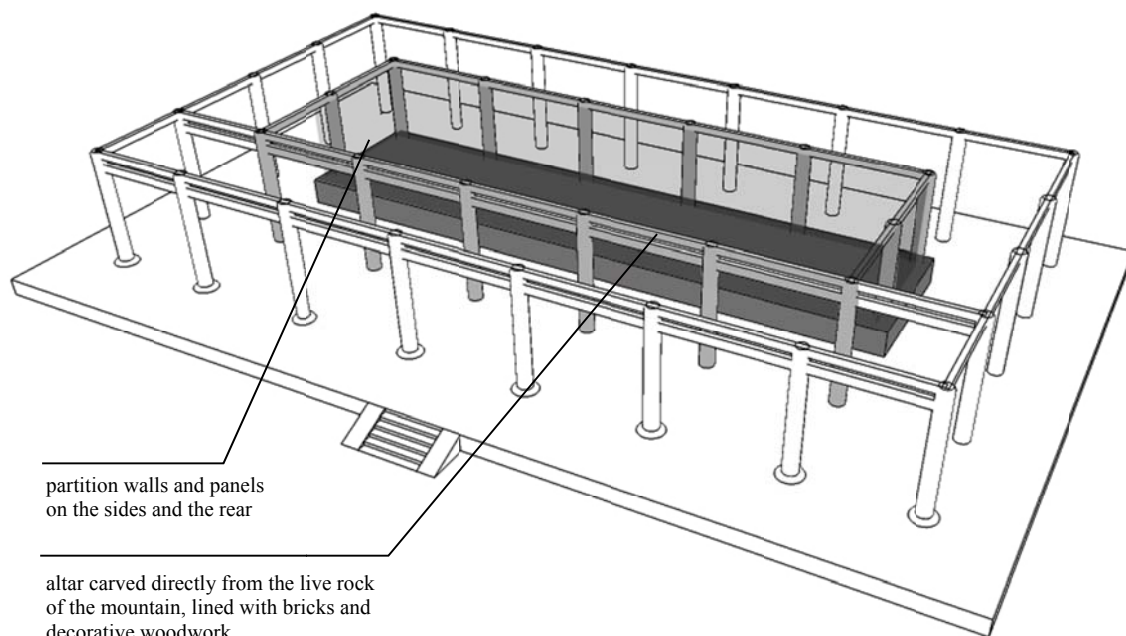


Figure 58 Remains and reconstructions of red and white color decoration schemes used at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)





● principle Buddhas

● attending Bodhisattvas, Heavenly Kings, etc.

N ←



Figure 14 Top: The arrangement of the Buddhist altar at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, shown in relation to the column network; Middle: Plan of the Buddhist altar at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi; Bottom: Line drawing of the Buddhist assembly housed on the altar in frontal view





Figure 15 View of the Buddhist assembly housed inside the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi  
Top: from north to south; Bottom: from south to north (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and  
Preservation at Tianjin University)





Figure 16 Statues of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra mounted on *vāhanas*, a lion and an elephant, housed inside the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi. Top: Mañjuśrī and attendants; Bottom: Samantabhadra and attendants (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)





Figure 17 Avatamsaka Trinity, featuring the true presence of Mañjuśrī with his lion *vāhana*, shown as housed in the Hall of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī's True Presence from "Panoramas of Mount Wutai" in Mogao Cave 61, Dunhuang, Gansu; dated to the Five Dynasties period

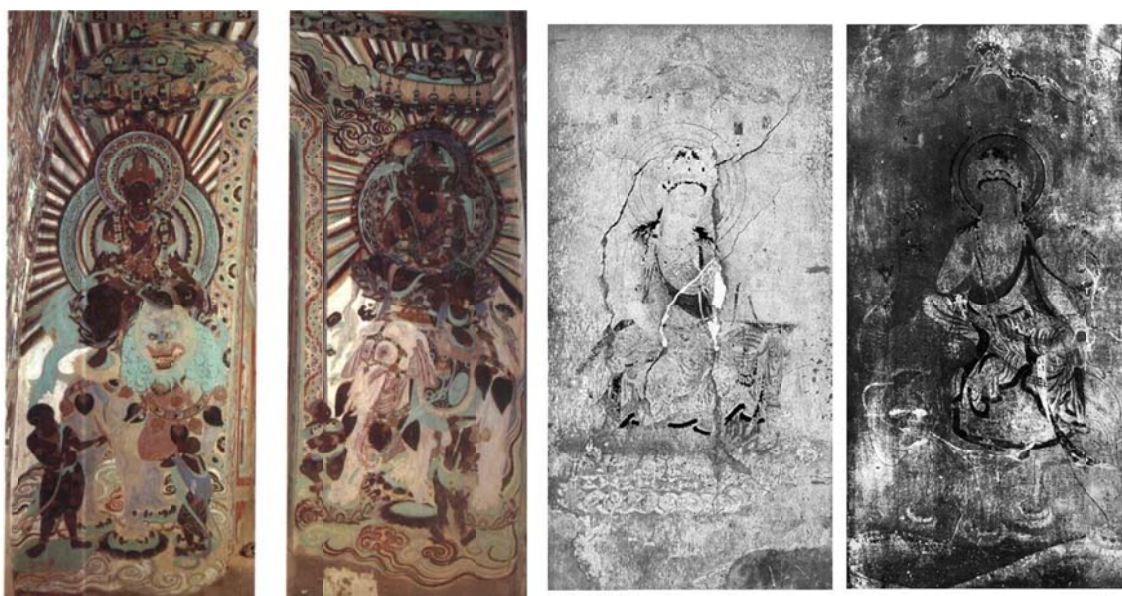


Figure 18 Left: Mural paintings of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra mounted on *vāhanas* and accompanied by attendants at Mogao Cave 148, Dunhuang, Gansu; dated to 776 CE, Tang dynasty by inscription; Right: Mural paintings of Mañjuśrī seated on a lotus throne, paired with Samantabhadra mounted on elephant *vāhana*, Kondō of Hōryūji, Nara; ca. 8th century CE; (from Dorothy C. Wong 2008, 141).

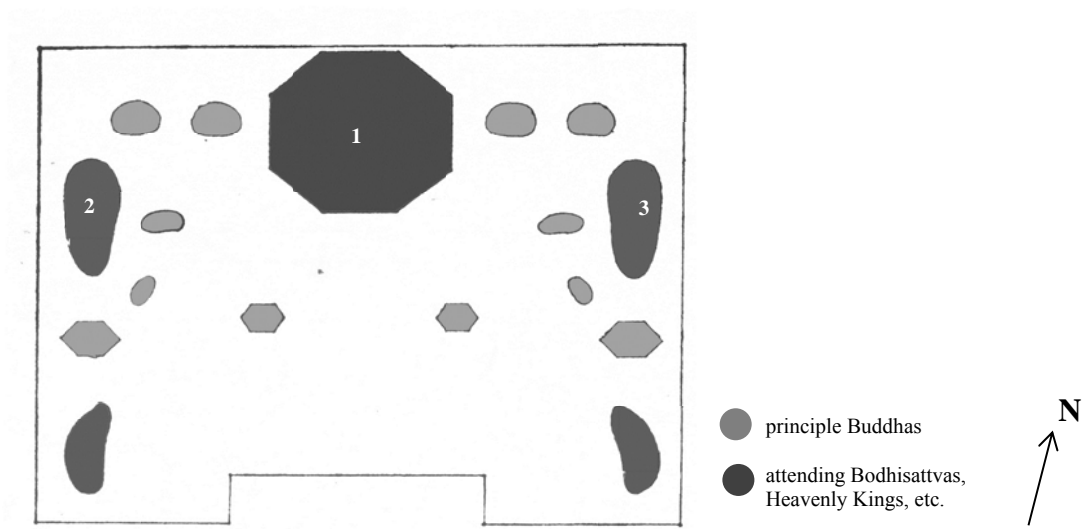


Figure 19 Plan of the Buddhist altar at the Main Hall of Nanchansi



Figure 20 Frontal view of the Buddhist assembly housed on the altar inside the Main Hall of Nanchansi



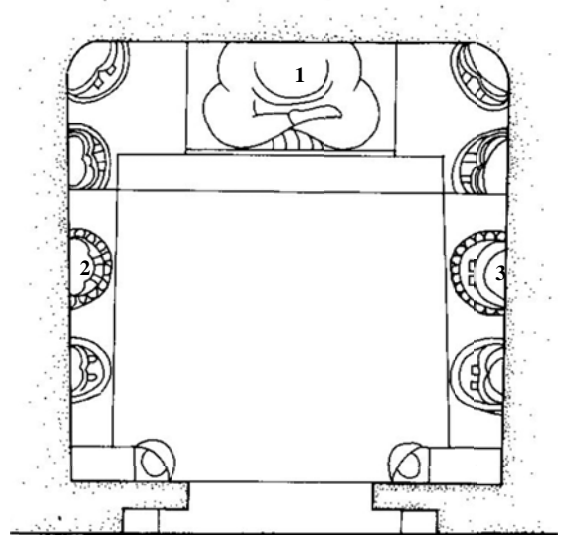


Figure 21 Left: Exterior view of the Central Cave of Xiaonanhai Grotto, located near the Northern Qi capital city of Ye, built as a meditation cave for Sengchou (480-560 CE); Right: Iconographic arrangement inside the Central Cave, featuring the Cosmic Triad of “Vairocana-Maitreya-Amitābha”

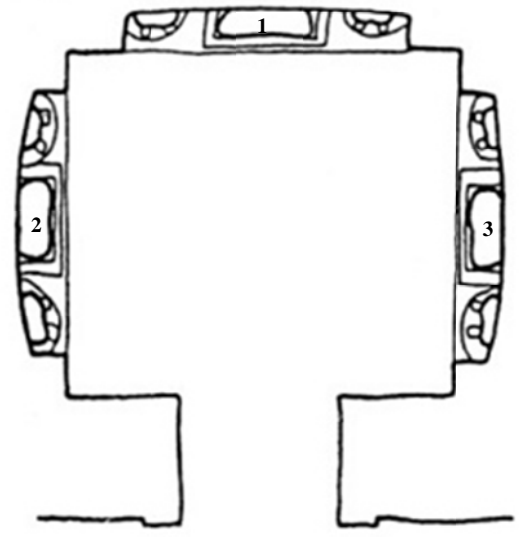


Figure 22 Left: Exterior view of the Dazhusheng Cave, located on Mount Bao, built by the monk Lingyu (517-605 CE), completed slightly later in Kaihuang 9 (589 CE) of the Sui dynasty; Right: Iconographic arrangement inside the Dazhusheng Cave, featuring the Cosmic Triad of “Vairocana-Maitreya-Amitābha”:  
1. Vairocana Buddha; 2. Amitābha Buddha; 3. Maitreya Buddha



Figure 23 The central Buddha housed at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, accompanied by six attendants, including Ananda and Mahākāśyapa, two standing Bodhisattvas and two kneeling Bodhisattvas (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)



Figure 24 Buddhist statue placed to the north of the central Buddha, likely represents Amitābha (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)



Figure 25 Buddhist statue placed to the south of the central Buddha, likely represents Maitreya (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)



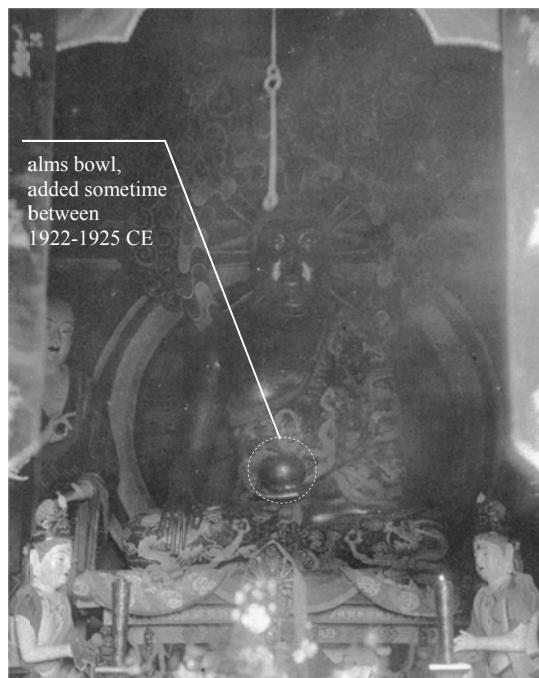


Figure 26 Historic photos of the central Buddha housed at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi.  
Left: Taken by Ono Genmyō in 1922 CE; Right: Taken by Meilixing Photo Studio in 1925 CE (from Tokiwa Daijō and Sekino Tadashi 1928a, vol.5, 26 and 28)



Figure 27 Central image based on the Mahābodhi model, carved in high relief inside the Northern Cave of Leigutai, Longmen Grottos, Luoyang; early Tang period

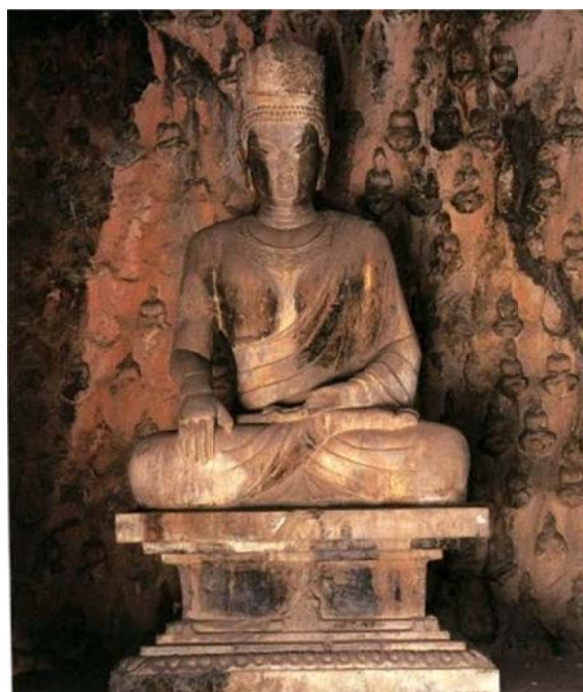


Figure 28 Statue based on the Mahābodhi model, relocated from nearby monasteries to the Southern Cave of Leigutai, Longmen Grottos, Luoyang; early Tang period

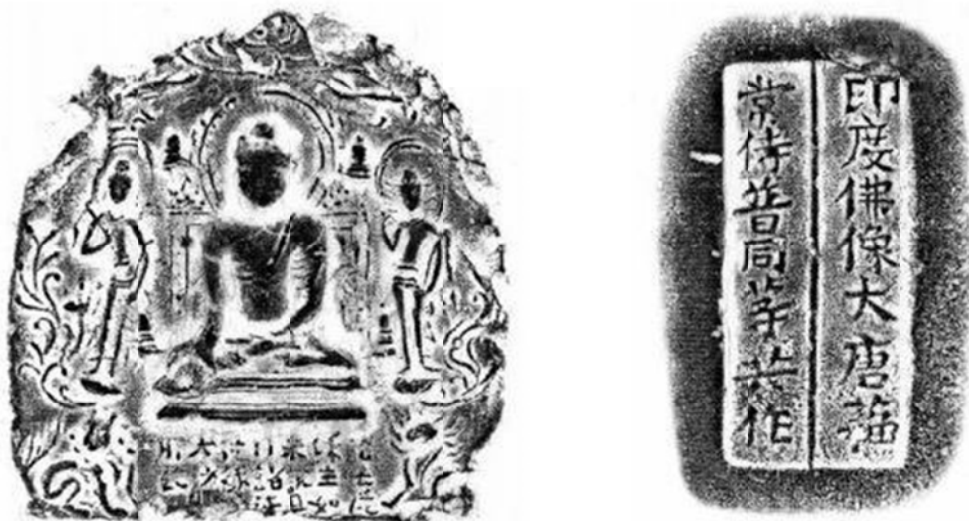


Figure 29 A clay plaque bearing a Buddhist image based on the Mahābodhi model, commissioned by the eunuch official Yang Sixu (659?-740 CE); Left: Rubbing of the image on the front side; Right: Rubbing of inscriptions stamped on the backside; (Collection of the National Museum of China, Beijing)



Figure 30 Bias-relief stone plaques with central Buddhist image based on the Mahābodhi model, originally made for the Tower of the Seven Jewels; Left: currently placed above the Eastern entrance to the Baoqingsi Pagoda in Xi'an, Shanxi; Right: dated to 703-704 CE of the Tang dynasty by inscription (Collection of Tokyo National Museum, Japan)



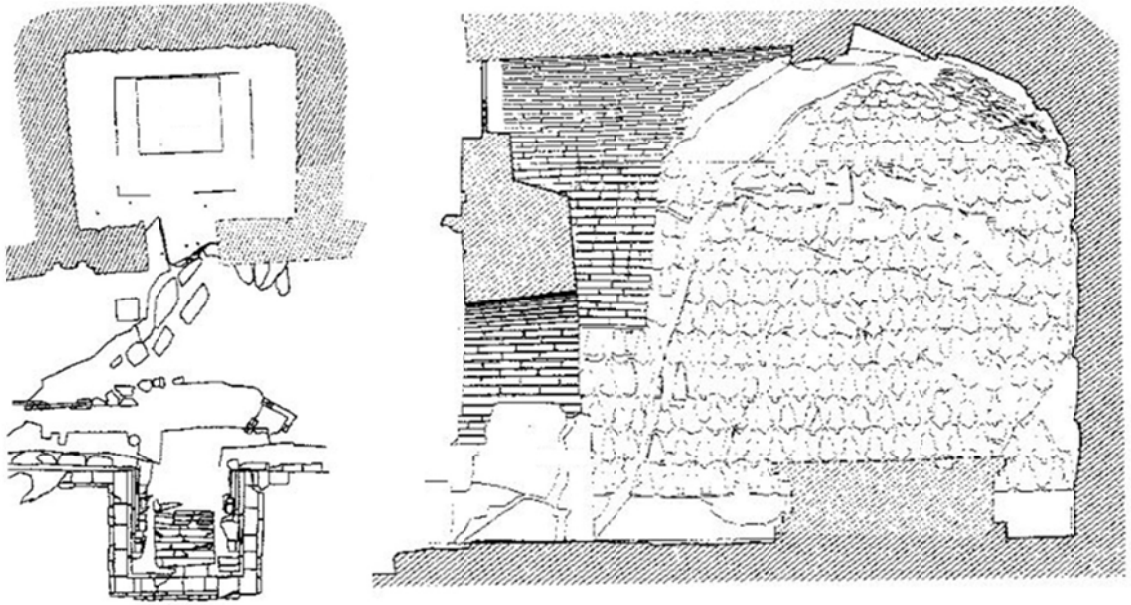


Figure 31 Plan and section drawing of the Southern Cave of Leigutai, Longmen Grottos, Luoyang; early Tang period



Figure 32 Smaller images of Bodhisattvas kneeling on lotuses covering the walls and the ceiling at the Northern Cave of Leigutai, Longmen Grottos, Luoyang; early Tang period; Left: Bodhisattva images above the entrance; Right: Bodhisattva found near the central Buddhist image



Figure 33 Painting on the back of the throne of the central Buddha at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi, depicting Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa, guardian of the north; Top: left panel; Bottom: right panel



Figure 34 Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa, found among a group of mural paintings of the Four Heavenly on the interior walls at the underground repository of the Śaṛīra Pagoda of the Pure Immaculate Light, Shenyang, Liaoning; dated to the 11th c. CE of the Liao dynasty by inscription





Figure 35 Amitābha Buddha, mural paintings at Mogao Cave 220, Dunhuang Grottos, Gansu; dated to early Tang period



Figure 36 Amitābha Buddha, mural paintings inside the Kondō of Hōryūji, Nara, Japan





Figure 37 Maitreya Buddha, as the main statue carved in high relief in the Central Cave of Leigutai, Longmen Grotto, Luoyang; dated to early 8th c. CE



Figure 38 Bias-relief stone plaques with Maitreya Buddhas, originally made for the Tower of the Seven Jewels; dated to early 8th c. CE (Collection of Tokyo National Museum, Japan)



Figure 39 Statue of a female figure attending to the Buddhist assembly at the southern end of the altar of the Buddha Hall at Foguangsi; previously identified as the “Offering Deliverance Commissioner from the Superior Capital” and the “Benefactor of the Buddha Hall”, Ning Gongyu (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)

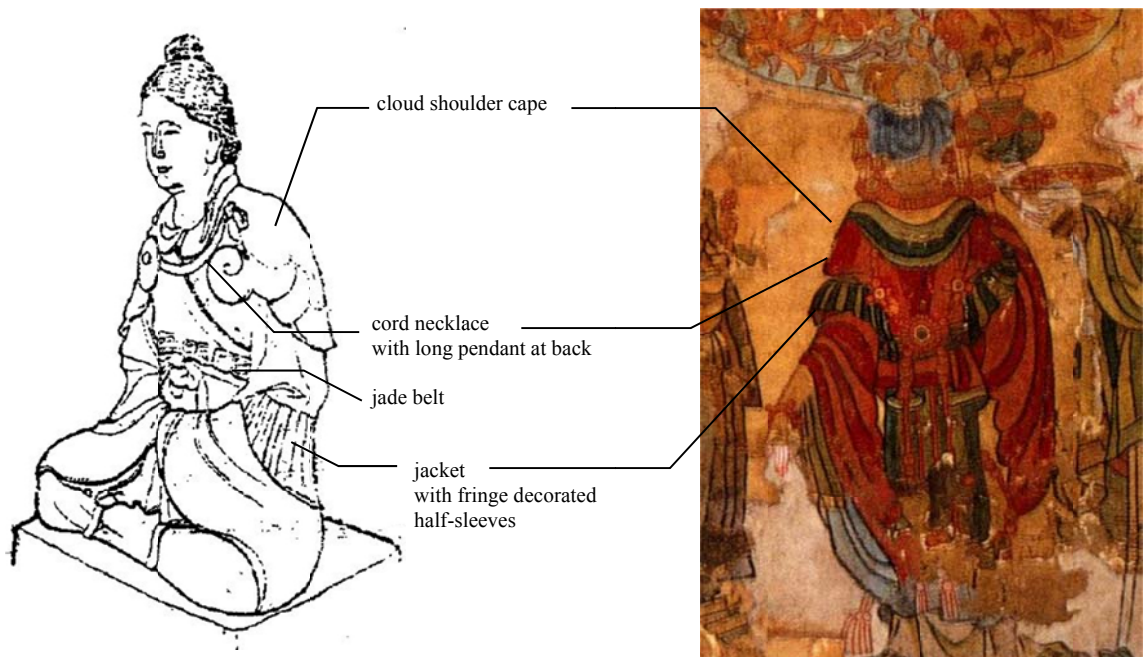


Figure 40 Important features of the celestial garment worn by the female statue at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi compared with the female shown in the Kajūji embroidery (after Liang Ssu-ch'eng 1944)





Figure 41 The Kajūji embroidery; collection of Nara National Museum, Japan; probably made ca. late-7th to early 8th c. CE in Tang dynasty China





Figure 42 Female figure among the celestial procession, mural panel flanking the entrance of the cave chamber, Mogao Cave 9, Dunhuang, Gansu; dated to late Tang period



Figure 43 Female donors in procession, Mogao Cave 9, Dunhuang, Gansu; dated to late Tang period

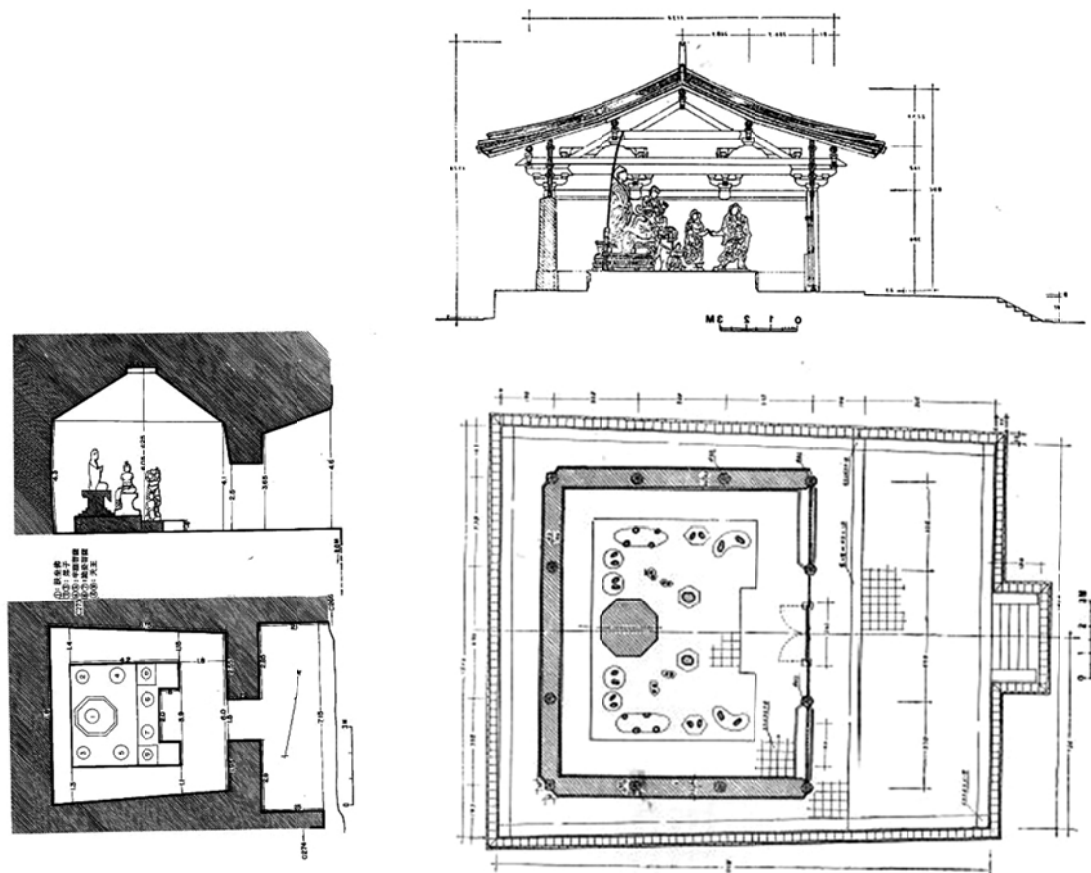


Figure 44 The spatial arrangement of early Tang timber-framed Buddha Hall compared with early Tang Buddhist cave shrine; Left: Section and Plan of Mogao Cave 205, Dunhuang, Gansu; built in the early Tang period (from Shih Chang-ju 1996); Right: Section and Plan of the Main Hall of Nanchansi, Wutai, Shanxi; built in mid-8th c. CE



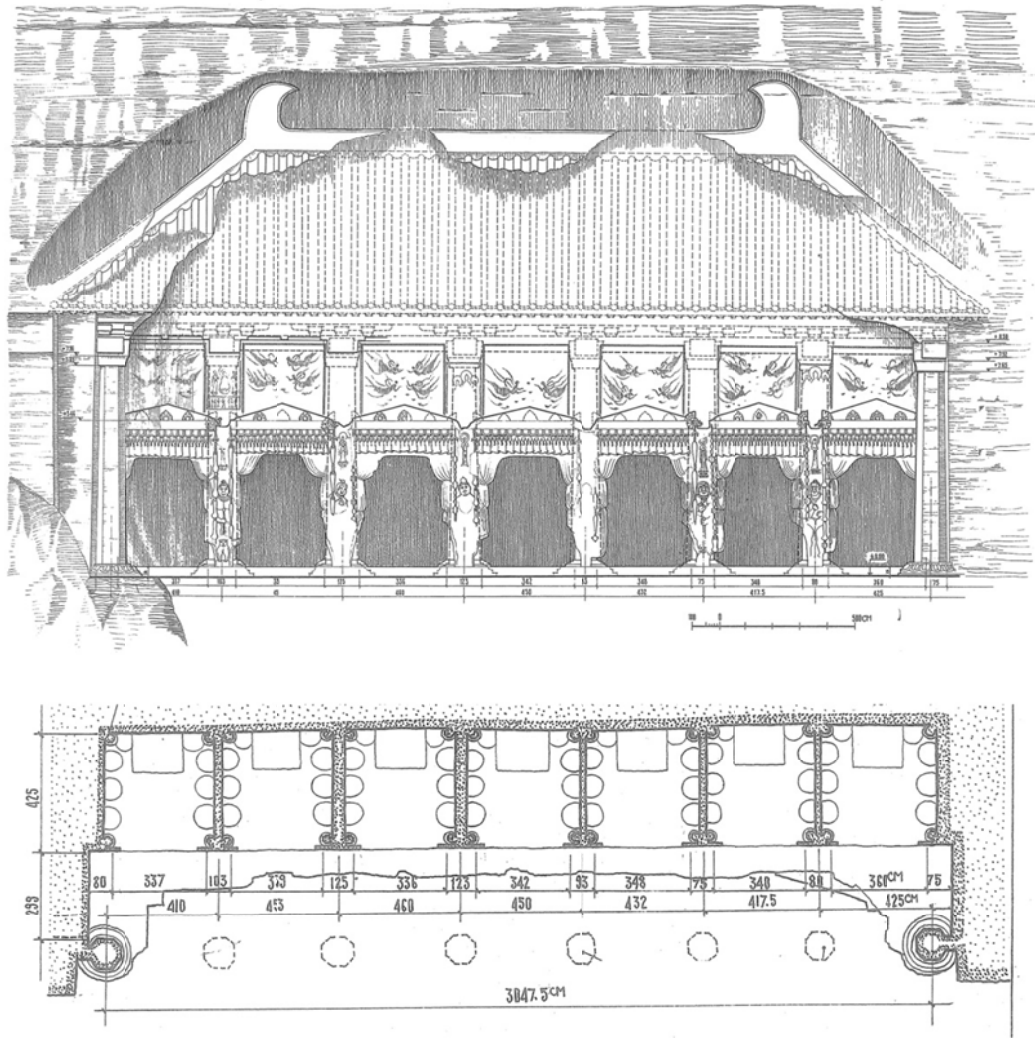


Figure 45 Elevation and plan drawing of Maijishan Cave 4, completed in the mid-sixth century under the Northern Zhou dynasty



Figure 46 Three main Buddhas housed inside the Golden Hall of Hōryūji: separately cast, each covered by a separate canopy and placed on portable individually made wooden thrones



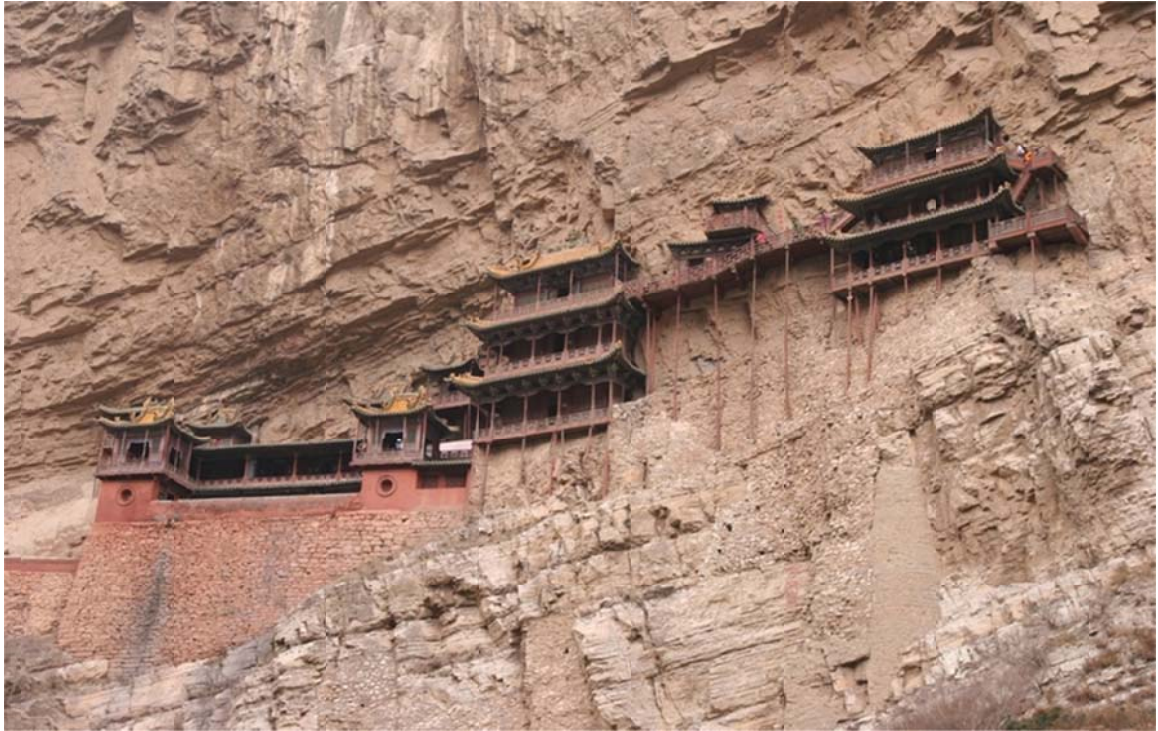


Figure 59 The Midair Suspension Monastery at Hunyuan, Shanxi province; extant structures dated to the Ming dynasty (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)

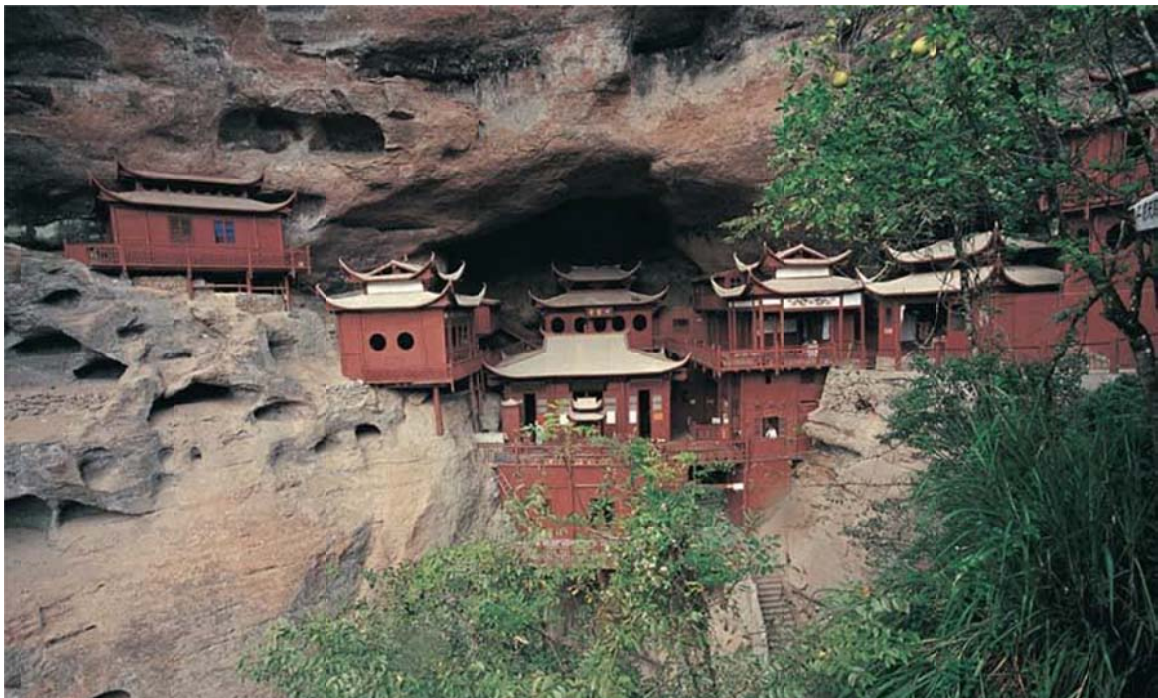


Figure 60 Nunnery of the Sweet Dewdrops at Taining, Fujian province; original structures dated to the Southern Song dynasty; present structures rebuilt after fire damage (courtesy of Center for Architectural Theory and Preservation at Tianjin University)





Figure 61 the Great Buddha Monastery at Laitan,  
Sichuan



Figure 64 Section drawing of the Adorned Rock  
Monastery in Chongqing

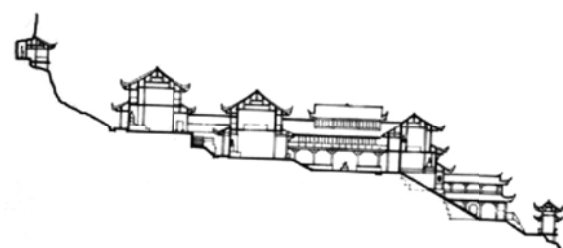


Figure 62 Section drawing of Temple of Celestial  
Master's Craven at Mount Qingcheng



Figure 63 The Cloudy Rocks Monastery at Mount Doutuan, Sichuan

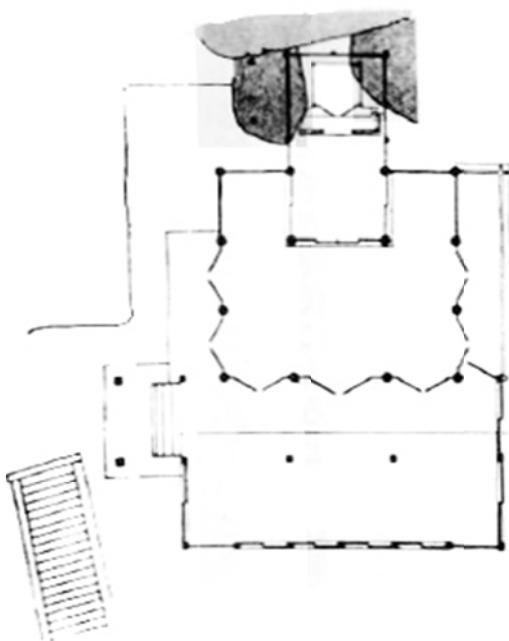


Figure 65 Main Hall at the Fudōji , Shiga

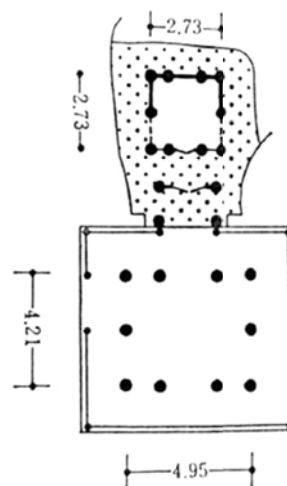


Figure 66 Natadera on Mount Kōya, Ishikawa



Figure 67 Nageiredō of the Sanbutsuji, located on Mount Mitoku, Tottori



Figure 68 Ryūganji located at Oita, Kyūshū



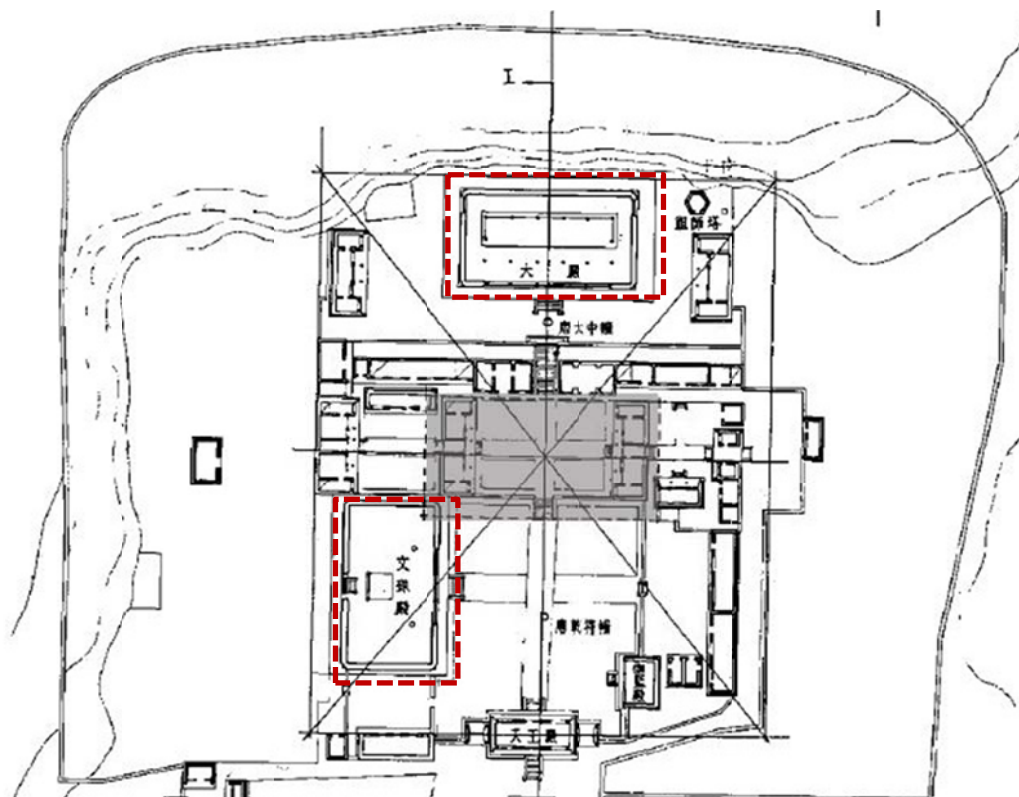


Figure 69 The original site of the Great Pavilion of Maitreya according to Fu Xi'nian's reconstruction (from Fu Xi'nian 1998a, 235)



Figure 70 Left: Funerary pagoda near the Ancient Bamboo Grove Monastery; Right: Memorial stele inscription dated to 1145 CE of the Jin dynasty

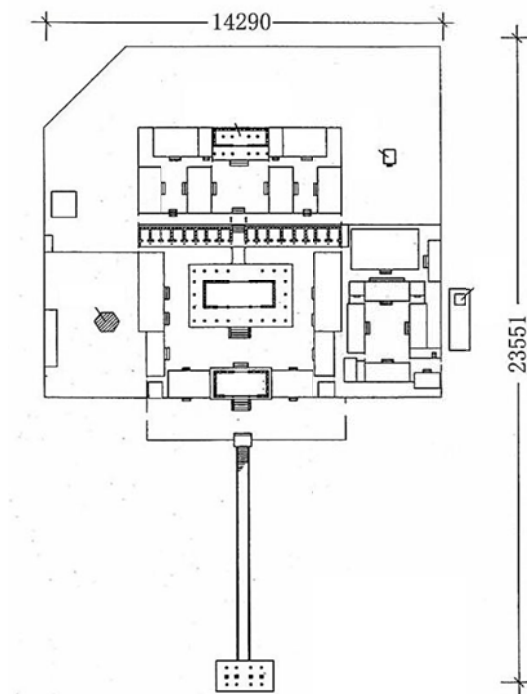


Figure 71 Plan of Jin'gesi reconstructed during the Ming dynasty period



Figure 72 Sūtra-pillar located far from the current site, bearing inscription of Jin'gesi; dated to 787 CE

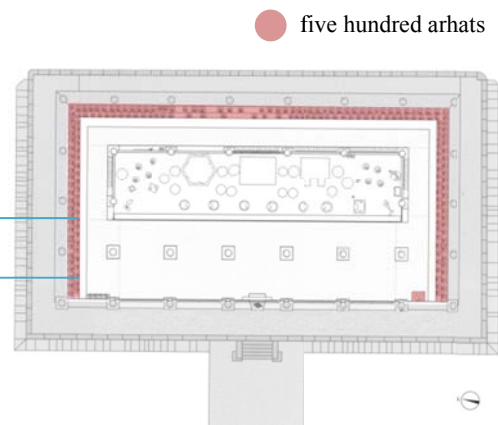


Figure 73 Sculpture of five hundred arhats and overhanging decorations commissioned by monk Bensui during the Ming dynasty renovation at the Buddha Hall of Foguangsi





Figure 74 Sculpture of Avalokiteśvara in grotto setting at the Śākyamuni Hall, Longxingsi, Zhengding



Figure 75 Sculpture of Avalokiteśvara in grotto setting at the Bodhisattva Pavilion, Dulesi, Ji county

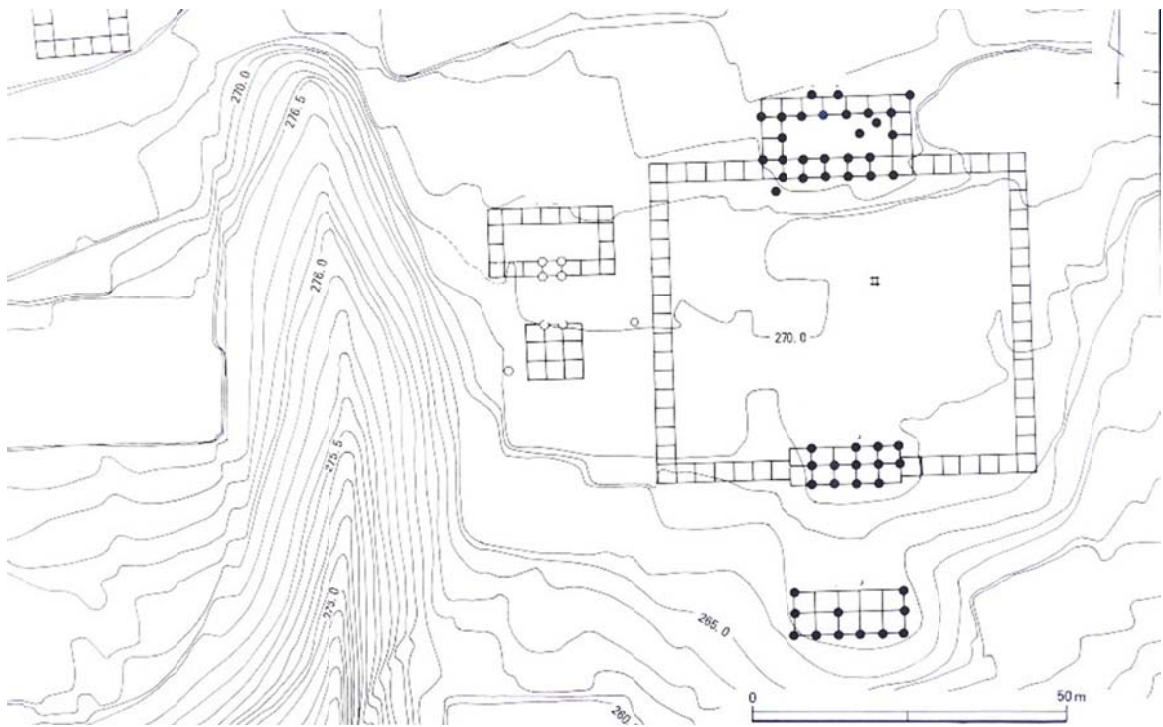


Figure 76 Reconstructed plan of the Keharahaiji, Nara

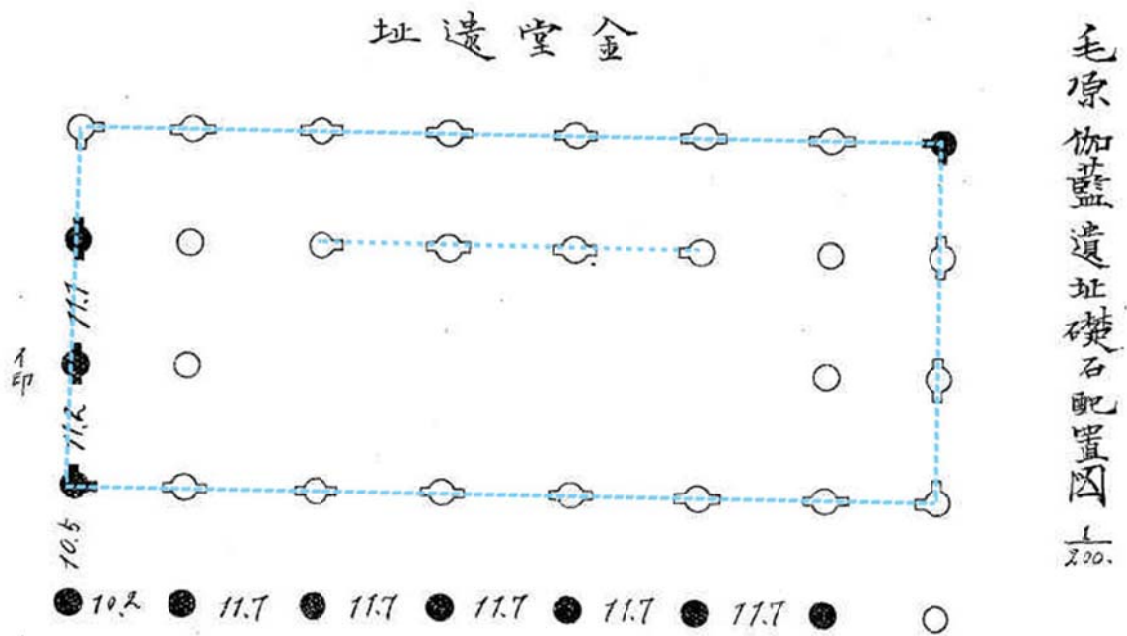


Figure 77 Column platform remains from the Golden Hall of Keharahaji (from Sekino Tadashi) and reconstructed plan of the hall based on the platforms formations



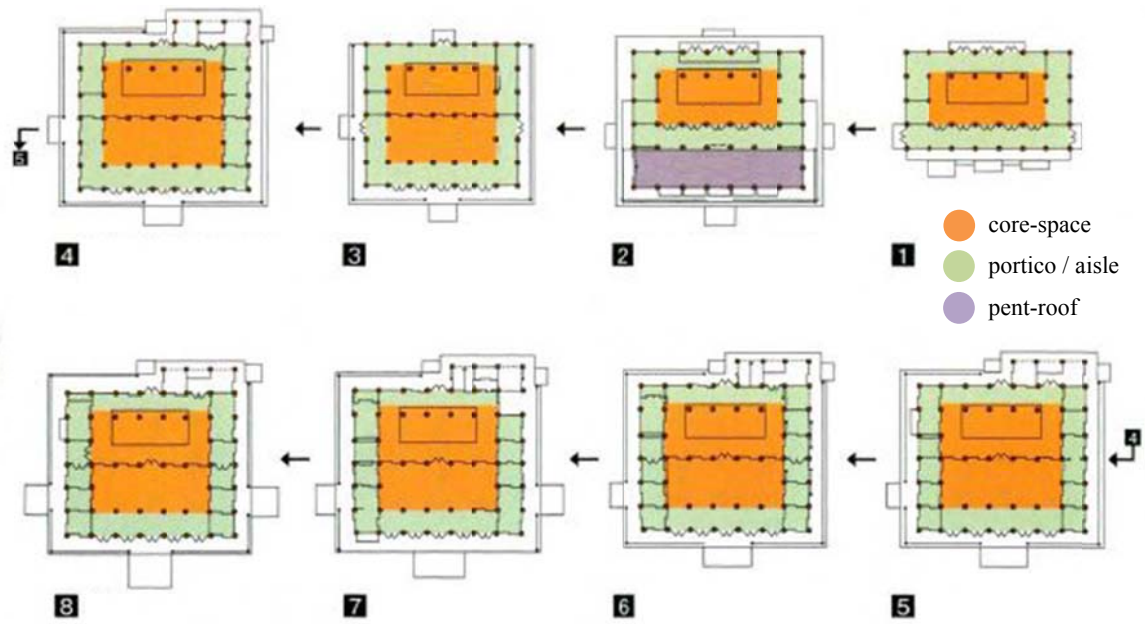


Figure 78 Different stages of construction in the history of the Mandara Hall at the Taimadera, Nara, Japan

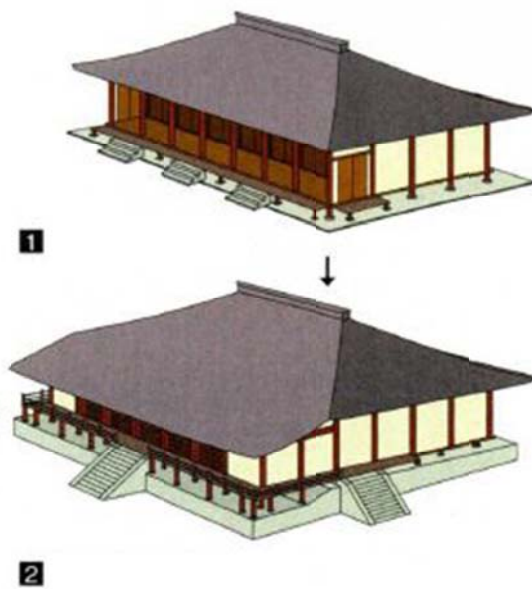


Figure 79 The initial and post-renovation Mandara Hall at the Taimadera, Nara

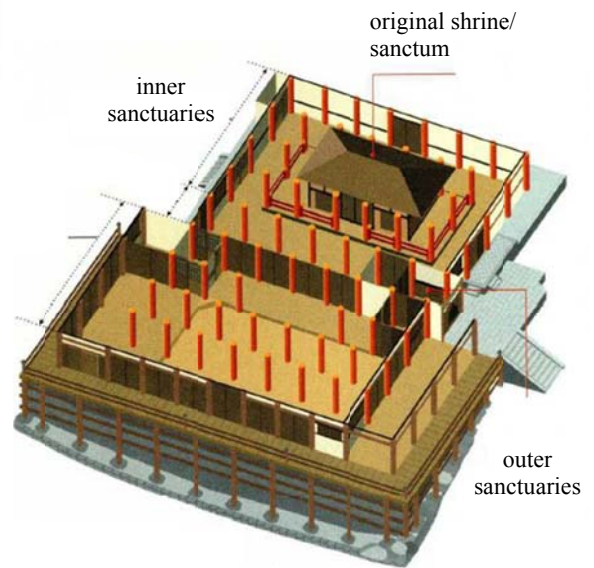


Figure 80 Complex interior space of the Ishiyamadera with layers of structure

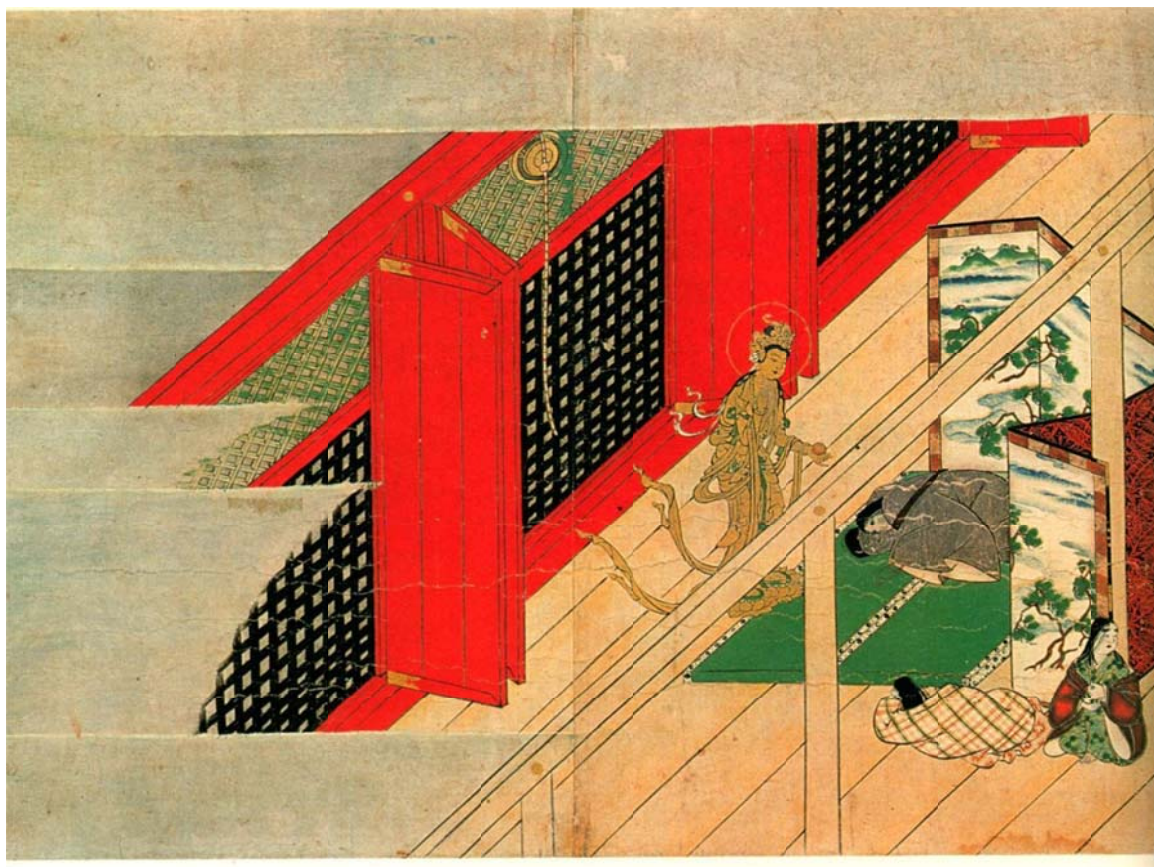


Figure 81 *Illustrated Scrolls of the Founding of Ishiyamadera* depicting worshipers in Buddhist retreat





Figure 82 Esoteric drawing of Mañjuśrī with a representation of the Five Peaks Mountain in the background; ca. 12th century CE (Collection of Daigoji, Kyōto, Japan; from Bunkachō ed. 1997, vol.1, 186)



Figure 83 Detail of a woodblock print of Mañjuśrī with the Five-Syllable mantra appearing in auspicious clouds in the background; ca. 984 CE; found in a statue brought from China to Japan in 988 CE by Chōnen (Collection of Seiryōji, Kyōto, Japan)



Figure 84 Detail of Mañjuśrī depicted with five-peaked hair braids in the "Central Eight-petal Precinct" of the Womb Mandala; ca. 9th c. CE; brought back to Japan from China in 806 CE by Kukai (Collection of Tōji, Nara, Japan)



Figure 85 Detail of a hanging scroll of the Five-Syllable Mañjuśrī with five-peaked hair braids; drawn by Monkan bō Kōshin (1278-1357 CE); dated to 1334 CE by inscription (Collection of Nara National Museum, Japan)



Figure 86 Left: Esoteric statue of Mañjuśrī with five-peaked hair braids, ca. 13th c. CE (Collection of Tokyo National Museum, Japan); Right: Standing statue of Mañjuśrī as a youth with five-peaked hair braids; ca. 13th c. CE (Collection of Tokyo National Museum, Japan)



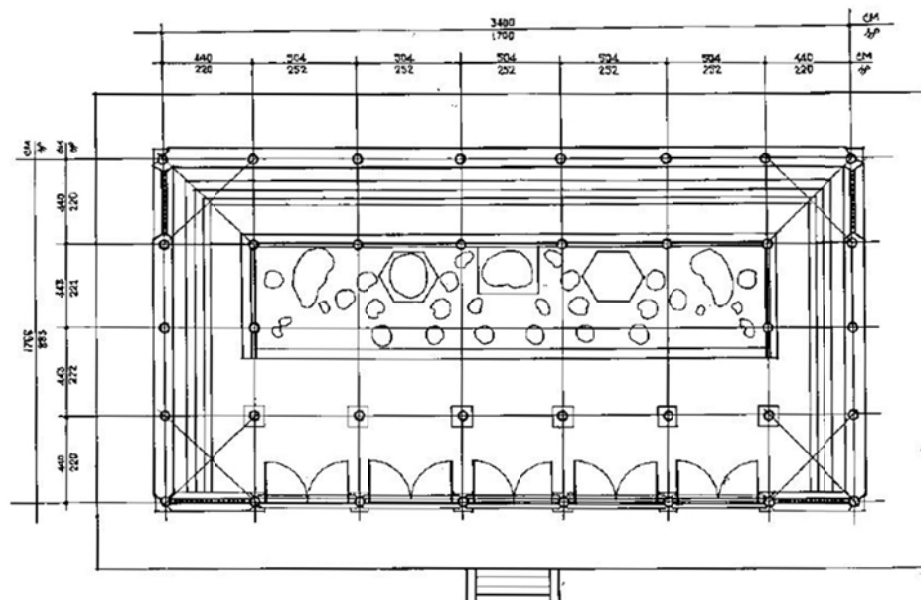


Figure 87 Measurements of the ground plan of the Buddha Hall at Foguangsi in metric units and modular units *fēn* (from Fu Xi'nian 1998a)

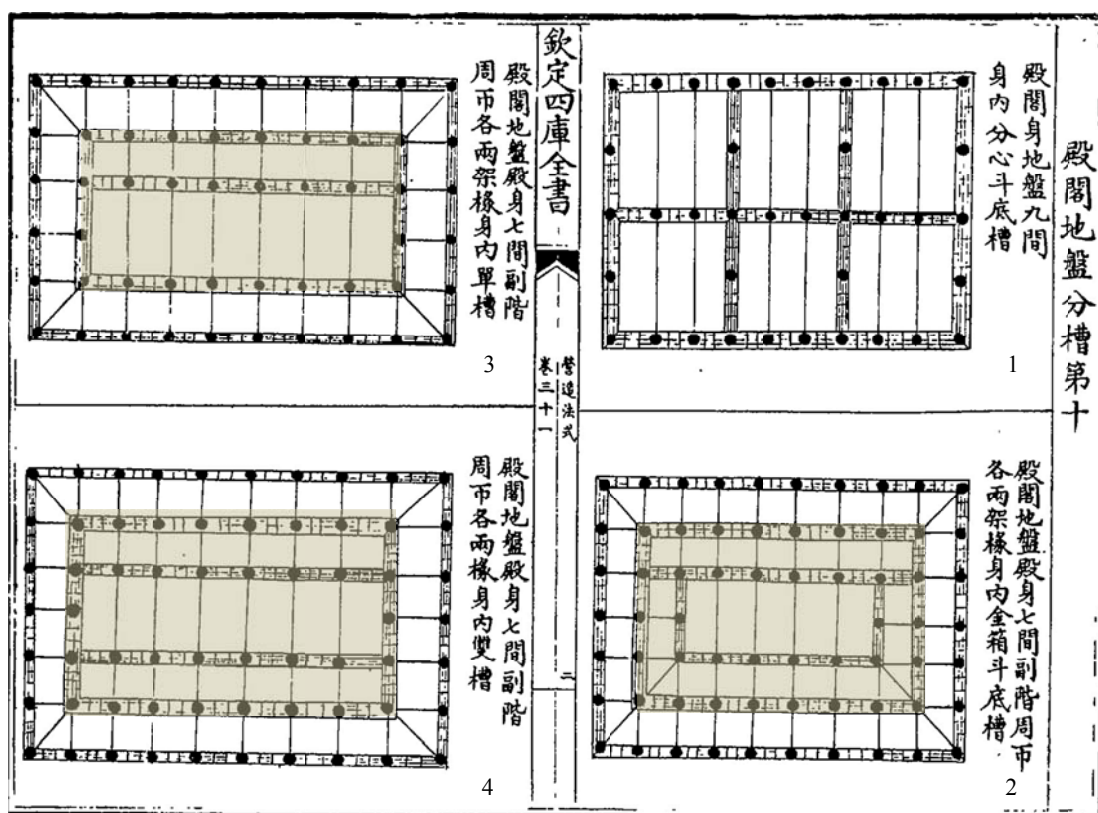


Figure 88 Diagrams of “*dipan fencao*” in the *Building Standards* (Wenyuan’ge Edition), with shaded area showing core-space: 1. *fēnxin doudi cao* (“tripartite layout”); 2. *jinxiang doudi cao* (“centric layout”); 3. *single-cao*; 4. *double-cao*

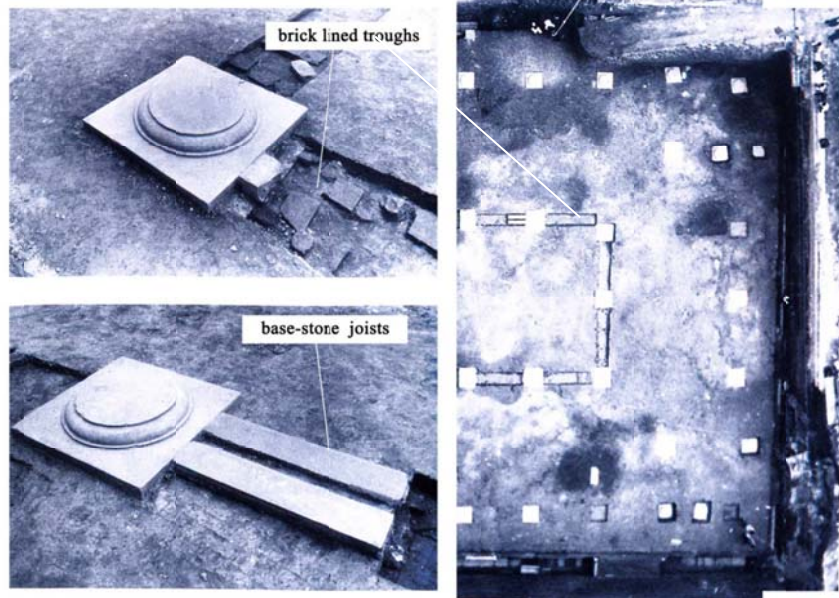


Figure 89 Site no. 37 of Renshougong / Jiuchenggong, Linyou, Shaanxi; Sui-Tang period

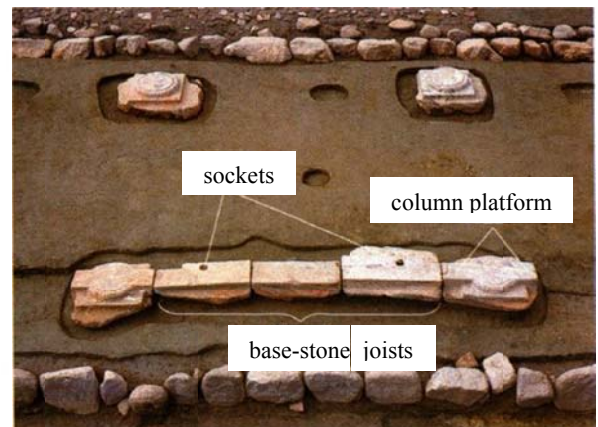
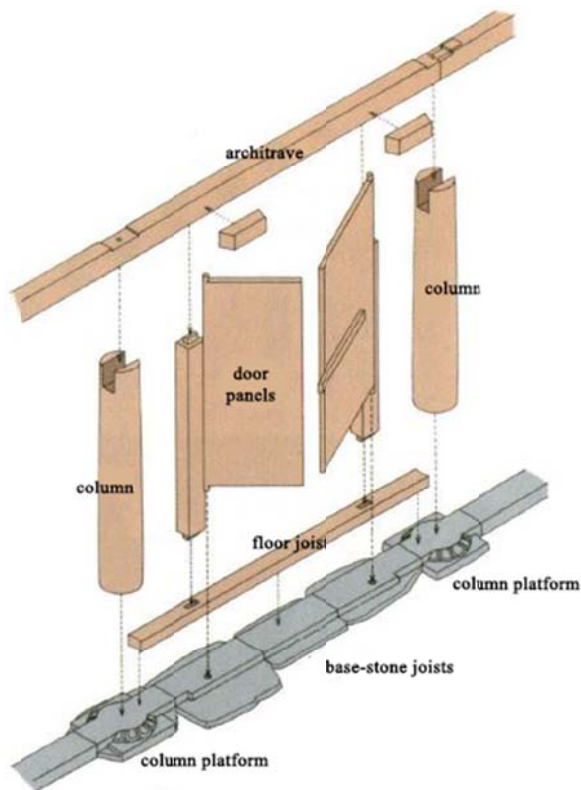


Figure 90 Column base supporting stones and base-stone joists found at the ruins of Yamadadera, Sakurai, Nara, Japan; originally built in the seventh century CE (after Hakozaiki Kazuhisa 2012)

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